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THE SPY

A TALE OF THE NEUTRAL GROUND



THE SPY;
A TALE OF
THE NEUTRAL GROUND

BY
JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

WITH A GENERAL INTRODUCTION BY

HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

ALSO, WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

WILLIAM COTTON

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOLUME I

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INTRODUCTION

BY

HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

COOPER is the fighting Quaker of American literature. While Irving, the esthetic Federalist, tidied his garden plots and built Dutch Alhambras, humorously romantic, on the Hudson, Cooper swung toward democracy, colored his social philosophy with the ideas of Jefferson, and took the continent and the oceans for his theme. He is a pound American where Irving is an ounce, yet more propagandist than artist; a maker of national epics (almost our only one) who never achieved a style, a man on a scale as great as the popularity of his books, which exceeded that of any other American writer and equalled Byron's and Scott's, with faults on a scale as great also. He alone was able to make literary use of that passion for what his compatriots called so vaguely freedom, which inspired the political and social achievements of the young United States. Not creative in his ideas like Emerson and Thoreau, not a humanist and artist like Poe

and Hawthorne, he belongs with Melville and Whitman, men born upon the surge of the American flood and torn by its conflicts, incoherent like them sometimes and sometimes eloquent and expressive.

It is impossible to discuss Cooper merely as a man of letters, for he was artistic by instinct only and a writer by compulsion rather than determined choice. To write of him, as has been the custom, solely in terms of the romantic movement, as if Rousseau and Scott, plus a forest, made Leatherstocking inevitable, is to reduce one of the most revealing figures of the early century to the dimensions of a second-rate imitator. Cooper's sins against art were sometimes monstrous, and when he wrote in what he regarded as a literary tradition, he could be insufferable; but when he was his own man he was a world figure.

The panoply and trappings of the romantic movement have gone stale in Cooper's books. The Unknowns who stalk through his novels and at the end are little more than gestures, the chivalrous gentlemen always proposing to die for some one, the rebels against tyranny, the blighted

souls, the too modest women who would burn to death rather than remove their petticoats, are all imitated from the fashionable romance of the day or his favorite Shakespeare, and are usually tiresome and sometimes impossible. Nothing could be less like the direct force of Cooper's correspondence than this folderol. He was fascinated by it, as we are fascinated by realism, but it was not the man himself nor his real "gift" in writing. Like most unliterary writers, he picked up the vices of a contemporary style and thought they made literature. More of this later. It was the inner spirit of romanticism, its expansiveness, its passionate cult of the ego, its rush back from artifice to the vast simplicities of nature, that touched his heart and moved his pen to its best writing, perhaps because one hope of romance was a fresh world where man could be reformed in the image of desire, and Cooper knew the wilderness (and the sea also) when, for a moment, it was, in this sense, romantic.

The influence of Rousseau was as great, though less direct, upon Cooper as upon Jefferson. The rights of man

(when he likes the men) are to him indisputable, the primitive draws him like a magnet, he distrusts every convention that interferes with the free development of man, provided his prejudices allow him to call it a convention. It is he and not Scott who describes the wild landscapes in which Rousseau's ideal man might return to nature. The Trossachs are mere stage scenery beside the Adirondacks, the plains, and the forests of the Genessee. Scott's primitives are by-characters merely, while with Cooper they become protagonists of the stories. Cooper gave to his country and to Europe, particularly to restless Europe, the concrete figures of noble savage, simple-hearted woodsman, and the conception of free opportunity in a boundless West which called like Alps to Jura to fervid imaginations fed on Rousseau's philosophy. After the disillusionment of the Napoleonic wars, here courage, innocence, generosity, skill might all adventure upward in romantic air.

The happy union of history and romance which Scott had effected for two continents was undoubtedly a factor in Cooper's success. He borrowed and worsened not mere-

ly the romantic trappings of Scott's novels but their stiffening of historical incident, and so profited by the path round the world which they had made. Yet he realized his essential independence. "Americans," he wrote in *The Travelling Bachelor*, "have too much common sense to make good subjects for literature. Descriptions of society on the borders have positive though no very poetical interest. History and romance have not been successfully blended in America." His "gift" lay elsewhere, and nothing disgusted him more than to be called, as he so often was, the American Scott.* Their provinces were different, and where they overlapped, he was an imitator, and often a bungling one. To help the imagination to escape from a cramped or a petty life is a function of romance which both men shared. To let man return to nature and the unspoiled virtues of a wide but not unfriendly wilderness was a function of romance also, in which Cooper was Rousseau's disciple and a scout in the new continent

* *The Correspondence of James Fenimore Cooper*. Edited by his grandson, James Fenimore Cooper. p. 227.

for the powerful romantic ideas of Europe. Hence his easy popularity. But to stop with such a definition is to miss the qualities which make Cooper unique. If there were only Rousseau and Scott to account for Cooper, we should have added one more to the long list of American literary parasites upon European fashions which still fill our libraries with volumes that nobody reads.

European literature formed Irving, but European literature, beyond the primary urge of romantic ideas and political philosophy, was Cooper's bane. His Americanism was a raging life-long combat which engendered such heat that his books are hot with the fire and clogged with the ashes of the conflagration. Irving was a man of letters who knew how to profit by his borrowings: Cooper was a hard-headed romantic who used literature as the handiest means of gaining his ends, which often had little reference to art. He was best when most self-reliant. More than Irving, he must be seen as an American before the fruits of his genius and the qualities of his romance can be appraised.

The scene for both men was that turbulent America of the early 1800's (Irving was born in 1783, Cooper in 1789) in which the Federalist plutocracy was in disastrous combat with the advocates of the rights of man and republican principles logically carried out. Both men were brought up Federalists, but while Irving gave up the real world of American struggle for a Utopia of his own imaginings and warmed his meagre blood at the dying fires of European feudalism, Cooper never ceased striving to find a medium between democracy and aristocracy. Both men fled to Europe. Irving returned with his English reputation, and letting politics and his fellow countrymen go their own way, was almost forgotten, but loved and respected. Cooper, the patriot, who for five years had defended republicanism in Europe, came home still angry with Europe, to a commercialized, equalitarian America, and never to his dying day knew clearly what had happened to him or to America. Irving's art was minor, though excellent, because only minor impulses, negative chiefly, went into it. Cooper's was major in scope and

most imperfect in execution, because most of the great impulses of his age in murky confusion crowded upon his pen.

It is difficult indeed to grasp Cooper from the accounts usually given of him. Lounsbury, whose history of the reception of his books can scarcely be excelled, was too engaged with carrying on the Cooperian vendetta against a supercilious England to be much concerned with subtle analyses of the man. D. H. Lawrence, in his epic chapter,* neglects the patent fact that Cooper's perfect domesticity makes him a bad theme for an essay upon blighted lives, and does not see that his intense virility is poor evidence for a revival of the eighteenth century thesis that man degenerates in America. American critics have discussed him merely as a child of the romantic movement or an offspring of the frontier. The unique quality of Cooper's romance at its best cannot be explained by either Rousseau in Europe or the forest at home. It comes from deeper levels than his truculence or his hard-headed desire for an

* *Studies in Classic American Literature.*

income, and the escape of energy suppressed is merely its vehicle. It is based upon predispositions deeply bred in the man. It is characterized by two strong emotions of which one, a fierce republicanism is obvious, and can be left for later discussion. But the other is not obvious. Cooper, in one part of his soul, was and always remained a Quaker. As a Quaker he judged human nature, and created character when he could create at all. To call Cooper the Quaker romanticist is to put too much in a term, but without his Quakerism he would have been much nearer to a merely American Scott. Without this imprint of a peculiar culture he would never have made Natty Bumppo or Long Tom Coffin, or even Harvey Birch, never in short have been Cooper. Lounsbury calls him a Puritan, forgetting for the moment that his dislike of New England Yankees was so strong that even Boston biscuits kept him awake at night. He was Puritan when he scolded, but at his moral best a Quaker. The distinction is important.

The Quaker doctrine of the inner light and the Quaker discipline of simplicity, so widely spread in early America,

have seldom survived in the conflict with more noisy or more adaptable religions, and have ever given way before an increase in luxury and self-gratification, or hot blood demanding the active life. Yet where youth has been exposed to their sweet austerities there is seldom complete escape. The intellect may seek a more measured approach to the Deity, yet a sense of fortifying spiritual presence will remain. Gusto for living, a will and a means to sharpen taste and savor experience, may make impossible for the Quaker's child that plan of simple living, self-restrained, which keeps the soul in readiness for the inner voice, yet a belief that simplicity of heart is more valuable than cleverness will persist, and the conception of a spiritual democracy, in which the pure of soul are equal in the sight of God, remains as a social philosophy which is overlaid but seldom entirely forgotten. Tolerance, respect for the good wherever found, non-aggression, a readiness to trust human nature, distrust of all mere worldliness, these traits have been carried out of Quakerism by thousands once subjected to its discipline, and woven deep into the fabric

of American idealism. Some of the threads have quietly rotted away, but many are still strong although they have long since lost the name of Quaker.

Curiously enough, but not so curiously after all, the rebels from Quakerism who have covered their hearts with the shields and armor of the world, have, with remarkable frequency, gone to the further extreme of Protestantism. The Episcopal church, with its decorous ritual, its traditional discipline, its language attuned to lovely communication with God, received the too worldly Quaker, and gave him a spiritual home and a creed and authority to stiffen the faith which his sophisticated soul could no longer find for itself. Simplicity and ritual, authority and self-discipline, are akin in this, that both escape disorder; and tradition is but self-dependence at a long remove.

Cooper is a perfect example of the Quaker transformed. His truculent, militant spirit, his willingness to fight (but not to seek combat), whether imaginatively at sea or in forest, or actually in courts of law, his dogmatism, his violent energy always seeking deeds (though after youth

seldom achieving them), seem little fitted to Quakerism. Yet George Fox was truculent. The Nantucket Quakers sought the whale in baths of blood around the world, and the practical energy of the Friends made Pennsylvania the model community in prosperity as well as government in the middle eighteenth century. That Cooper could have remained a Friend in any circumstance short of persecution, where he would have shone, is improbable. He was too full-blooded for such a faith except in its creative youth. He was not the Quaker type, and he was never consciously Quaker in his professions.

But no man can escape his youth, especially the child of a Quaker. His mother, so I judge from her portrait made in Cooperstown shortly before her death in 1817, was a good Quaker until the end, for she wears the "plain clothing," sure sign of an unwavering adherence to the "discipline." Quakers from the South (which means presumably New Jersey) visited Cooperstown "by fifties" in those early days. Judge Temple, in *The Pioneers*, Cooper's study of his father, is just such a Quaker as I have

been describing, forced by temperament and his own ambition into a pioneer world where the already stiffening Quakerism of Burlington was too ideal and too rigid to live by. It is rumored that the real Judge had been "put out of meeting." Yet in his ethics and his deeper purposes, Judge Temple seems Quaker still. He smiles with the author at the attempt to foist high church upon the New England immigrants, laughs at the pretentious worldliness of Richard, despises the pious legalism of Hiram Doolittle, and yet responds to good wine, good living, and good adventure as such hearty men will, but Quakers should not. In strong emotion he drops constantly to the "thou" and "thee" of his upbringing, and Cooper says of him, "he retained them (the habits and language impressed upon his youth by the traits of a mild religion) in some degree to the hour of his death." His dress is described as plain neat black. Thus did Cooper depict his father in the Judge, and thus, with qualifications and a deeper self-analysis, he might have described himself.

From this influence Cooper never entirely departed.

There are numerous references to Quakers and Quakerism in his books, most abundant naturally in the early volumes, but all respectful and sometimes affectionate. "A sect," he says in *The Crater*, written toward the end of his life, "whose practice was generally as perfect as its theory is imperfect." Long Tom Coffin is a Nantucket whaler, and therefore a Quaker by inference, and his simple religion is essentially Quaker as any one who reads over the chapter which records his death in the wreck may see. When Natty Bumppo in *The Pathfinder* is urged to join the church of England: "The 'arth is the temple of the Lord, and I wait on him hourly, daily, without ceasing, I humbly hope," he says. "No—no—I'll not deny my blood and color, but am Christian born, and shall die in the same faith. The Moravians tried me hard . . . but I've had one answer for them all—I'm a Christian already." This is naïveté, but it is not difficult for the reader of the Leatherstocking Tales to discover that Natty's Christianity is rudimentary Quakerism, with its sense of the immanence of the Creator, its non-aggression, its distrust

of the intellect, its intense self-respect, its tolerance: "Each color has its gifts," says Natty, "and one is not to condemn another because he does not exactly comprehend it." This was the first Christianity which Cooper knew, the simple and persuasive religion of his youth.

In spite of Miss Cooper's indignant denials, old Shipman, who supplied them with fish and venison at Coopers-town, was undoubtedly the prototype of Natty ("a very prosaic old hunter," she calls him, who wore leather stockings but was otherwise not the noble scout of the books). Miss Cooper was thinking of the transmogrified Natty of the later romances. Natty in *The Pioneers*, scrawny, simple, a little dull, is presumably a free portrait, like the others in that group, most of whom can be identified with the figures of Cooper's youth. But in a moral sense even the unromantic woodsman of *The Pioneers* is a new creation. "In a moral sense," Cooper says in his preface to the *Leatherstocking Tales*, "the man of the forest is purely a creation," and he adds in the Preface to a revised edition of *The Pioneers*, "a creation rendered

probable by such auxiliaries as were necessary to create that effect." At first this moral conception is expressed in simple terms of loyalty and an intuitive sense for the right. But later the moral nature of Natty gets a sharper definition. He becomes a philosopher who talks garrulously of his relations to the universe. Indeed, once past *The Pioneers*, Cooper never wavered in his conception, which was, as he says in the general Preface already quoted from, "a character who possessed little of civilization but its highest principles as they are exhibited in the uneducated, and all of savage life compatible with these great rules of conduct."

It was into Natty Bumppo that Cooper put his Quaker heart, and his description of the old scout as "a character, in which excessive energy and the most meek submission to the will of Providence were oddly enough combined,"* might have been self-portraiture of his best moments. But Cooper made of him a symbol, first of all of romantic escape, a figure ever retreating from the crash of falling

* *The Prairie*.

timber and the smoke of clearings, on into the unspoiled West. And next, an incarnation of ideal man in a definite limitation of circumstances. He is a primitive Christian who holds "little discourse except with one, and then chiefly of my own affairs." He depends for inspiration upon no book, for he cannot read, and upon no man, for he sees few who are spiritual, but only upon the inner light. He is tolerant. If the Indian scalps, it is because he is Indian, not because he is wicked. He is humble, and yet self-respectful as one who reverences God in himself. He defers to differences in worldly station, but only as of the world. He kills only where he must, and in needful killing is mindful of a concession to necessity that puzzles him. It is the one compromise the wilderness forces upon him. He is proud only of his "gifts" of white blood and a sure aim, his "nature" he takes from God and is true to it by simple inevitability. Strip him of his romance and he sinks to such a figure of a daring frontiersman as Simms in Cooper's own time, has drawn; then, on broader view, rises again by his ethical qualities to a personality of liter-

ary importance. The moral study of the naïve Hawk-Eye is in many respects more interesting than the far subtler but turgid analyses of *The Scarlet Letter*. And it is his moral nature which gives him distinction among other brave and loyal figures of romance.

It is Quaker morality, Quaker spirituality, and Natty is the best Quaker in American literature. His reliance upon the inner light, his inflexible simplicity which results not so much from need as by choice of an environment where, as he says in *The Deerslayer*, he can meditate, where he can live with loyal natures in accord with his "gifts," are Quaker traits. His love for the forest is far closer to the Quakers' withdrawal from the world, touched with romance, than to Rousseau's conception of primitive environment. George Fox, who himself wore leather breeches, and, more pertinently, urged men to forsake whatever cramped their spirits would have heard his own words echoed by Natty, and been far more comprehensible to the scout than were the Moravians.

The Quaker has been unfortunate in fiction and drama.

Prosperous Friends, turning to the world, have been proper subjects for satire, the humble Quakers in their communities have been too prosaic, too dull (the fire of martyrdom having long since departed) for literature which turns from the mediocre. Quaker writers have been too single-minded to do justice to the character creations of their faith. Milton could remain Puritan yet write a *Paradise Lost*, but the esthetics of the Quaker were burnt up in his inner fire, or his distrust of the world and its intellectualizing inhibited him from art. One had to be a bad Quaker in order to be a good poet or romanticist. Yet the Quaker ideal, as the seventeenth century created it, is winning and powerful. Cooper followed it to an environment where its principles synchronized with the simplicity of the wilderness, and the theory of the natural dignity of man. Hence the power of Natty Bumppo.

But Quakerism for Cooper was a faith of naïfs, lovely but lowly. He had long since overlaid the simple religion of John Woolman (also from Burlington) with sea experience and what he regarded as a more reasonable faith.

Although he did not join its communion until just before his death (a fact in itself striking) he was a lifelong Episcopalian, and if his novels are rich in Quaker principles, they are even richer in Anglican arguments. The Quakers of his own day and association were "plain people" in the literal sense of the term, and indeed this was a common appellation of derogatory intent for the smug, comfortable folk who had profited by the inhibitions of Quakerism and lost its spiritual intensity. Once the inner fire is quenched, the limitations of the simple life result in a barren experience and cold and petty minds. For Cooper, Quakerism was a religion of the plain people, and in its place he loved it. He himself was no longer simple, thought himself indeed far less simple than he was.

Natty, therefore, in so far as he is Quaker, is a symbol of the faith of Cooper's ancestry, a faith that seemed to him still lovely in uneducated men, and appropriate to naïve characters in a primitive environment. It was his plain intention in *The Pioneers* to make his Quaker naïfs lovable but quaint. But the beauty of the Quaker ideal \

was more to him than he knew. Natty became its spokesman, and his estimates of human value, when translated into philosophic English, represent a system, lucid and complete in its own sphere, which has been deeply influential upon the American mind. Nor has Natty himself been without deep influence upon the readers of Cooper.

If it is impossible to lift into the category of *The Last of the Mohicans*, Cooper's first great success, *The Spy*, this book is nevertheless not without great interest as the first American novel to exploit patriotism successfully as a theme, and not without close relations to Cooper's fundamental beliefs and interests. *The Spy*, indeed, contains all the elements which made Cooper famous as a romanticist, and lacks, in its content, only those items of social criticism which gradually intruded upon his romances until they burst through and made books of their own, books now largely forgotten, but containing some of the best social history of America. In *The Spy* is that historical background which Cooper could depict with such vividness and fidelity. In *The Spy* is the chase—which

supplies the tension for so many romantic stories, and which here, as always with Cooper at his best, involves incidents of the greatest excitement and interest. The famous hero, Harvey Birch, combines two of Cooper's favorite types, the Unknown, which he borrowed from earlier history, and the Naïf, which his Quaker imagination conceived of, and which found its purest type in Natty. Harvey Birch is both an Unknown and a Naïf. His romantic situation makes his fascination for the reader with a taste for romance, his moral qualities are his distinction. It is true that his sombre simplicity leads on to melodrama. It is true that Cooper's weakness for gentlemen gives the Virginia cavalry an undue place in the story. It is true that, as was usually the case in Cooper, the pure history and the historical characters in his story fail to dovetail with imaginative exactness into his romance. Washington in *The Spy* is a little vague, as of a stage character never coming from behind the veil of illusion. Scott could do this sort of thing better than Cooper. And the "humor" characters, such as the surgeon, smell of

the lamp and much reading in English classics. Nevertheless, neither *The Spy* as a story, nor Harvey Birch as a character, will dim. One reads still with keen pleasure, one wants more of Harvey. He rouses the imagination. His ethics are the ethics of a strong and marked personality. Even in this story of war, it took, I think, a Quaker-bred, familiar with the inner conflicts of the spirit, and convinced of the importance of spiritual integrity, to make of him far more than a Hero in Disguise.

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION

THERE are several reasons why an American, who writes a novel, should choose his own country for the scene of his story—and there are more against it. To begin with the—pros—the ground is untrodden, and will have all the charms of novelty; as yet but one pen of celebrity has been employed among us in this kind of writing; and as the author is dead, and beyond hopes and fears of literary rewards and punishments, his countrymen are beginning to discover his merit—but we forget—the latter part of the sentence should have been among the—contras. The very singularity of the circumstance, gives the book some small chance of being noticed abroad, and our literature is much like our wine—vastly benefited by travelling. Then, the patriotic ardor of the country, will insure a sale to the most humble attempts to give notoriety to anything national, as we have the strongest assurance our publisher's account of profit and loss will speedily show. Heaven forbid, that this don't prove to

be like the book itself—a fiction. And lastly, an Author may be fairly supposed to be better able to delineate character, and to describe scenes, where he is familiar with both, than in countries where he has been nothing more than a traveller. Now for the contras—we will begin by removing all the reasons in favor of the step. As there has been but one writer of this description hitherto, a new candidate for literary honors of this kind, would be compared with that one, and unfortunately he is not the rival that every man would select. Then, although the English critics not only desire, but invite works that will give an account of American manners, we are sadly afraid they mean nothing but Indian manners; we are apprehensive that the same palate which can relish the cave scene in Edgar Huntly, because it contains an American, a savage, a wild cat, and a tomahawk, in a conjunction that never did, nor ever will occur—will revolt at descriptions here, that portray love as anything but a brutal passion—patriotism as more than money-making—or men and women

without wool. We write this with all due deference to our much-esteemed acquaintance, Mr. Cæsar Thompson, a character which we presume to be well known to the few who read this introduction; for nobody looks at the preface until they are at a loss to discover from the book itself, what it is the author means. Then touching the reason, which is built on the hope of support from patriotic pride, we are almost ashamed to say, that the foreign opinion of love of our country, is nearer the truth than we affected to believe in the foregoing sentence. As for the last reason in favor of an American scene, we are fearful that others are as familiar with their homes as we are ourselves, and that consequently the very familiarity will breed contempt; besides, if we make any mistakes everybody will know it. Now we conceive the moon to be the most eligible spot in which to lay the scene of a fashionable modern novel, for then there would be but very few who could dispute the accuracy of the delineations; and could we but have obtained the names of some conspicuous places in that planet,

we think we should have ventured on the experiment. It is true, that when we suggested the thing to the original of our friend Cæsar, he obstinately refused to sit any longer if his picture was to be transported to any such heathenish place. We combated the opinions of the black with a good deal of pertinacity, until we discovered the old fellow suspected the moon to be somewhere near Guinea, and that his opinion of the luminary was something like European notions of our States—that it was not a fit residence for a gentleman. But there is still another class of critics, whose smiles we most covet, and whose frowns we must expect to encounter—we mean our own fair. There are those who are hardy enough to say that women love novelty; and a proper respect to our own reputation for discernment, compels us to restrain from controverting this opinion. The truth is, that a woman is a bundle of sensibilities and these are qualities which exist chiefly in the fancy. Certain moated castles, draw-bridges, and kind of a classic nature, are much required by these imaginative beings.

The artificial distinctions of life also have their peculiar charms with the softer sex, and there are many of them who think the greatest recommendation a man can have to their notice, is the ability to raise themselves in the scale of genteel preferment; very many are the French valets, Dutch barbers, and English tailors, who have received their patents of nobility from the credulity of an American fair; and occasionally we see a few of them, whirling in the vortex left by the transit of one of these aristocratical meteors, across the plane of our confederation. In honest truth, we believe, that one novel with a lord in it, is worth two without a lord, even for the nobler sex—meaning us men. Charity forbids our insinuating that any of our patriots respond to the longings of the other sex, with an equal desire to bask in the sunshine of royal favour; and least of all, may we venture to insinuate, that the longing generally exists in a ratio exactly proportioned to the violence with which they lavish their abuse on the institutions of their forefathers.—There is ever a reaction in human feel-

ings, and it was only when he found them unattainable, that Æsop makes the fox call the grapes sour!

We would not be understood as throwing the gauntlet to our fair countrywomen, by whose opinions we expect to stand or fall; we only mean to say, that if we have got no lords and castles in the book, it is because there are none in the country. We heard there was a noble within fifty miles of us, and went that distance to see him, intending to make our hero look as much like him as possible; when we brought home his description, the little gipsey, who sat for Fanny, declared she wouldn't have him if he were a king. Then we travelled a hundred miles to see a renowned castle in the east, but, to our surprise, found it had so many broken windows, was such an out-door kind of a place, that we should be wanting in Christian bowels to place any family in it during the cold months; in short, we were compelled to let the yellow haired girl choose her own suitor, and lodge the Whartons in a comfortable, substantial and unpretending cottage. We repeat we mean nothing dis-

respectful to the fair—we love them next to ourselves—our money—our book—and a few other articles. We know them to be good-natured, good-hearted—ay, and good-looking hussies enough; and heartily wish for the sake of one of them, we were a lord, and had a castle in the bargain.

We do not absolutely aver, that the whole of our tale is true; but we honestly believe that a good portion of it is; and we are very certain, that every passion recorded in the volumes before the reader has and does exist; and let us tell them that is more than they find in every book they read. We will go farther, and say that they have existed within the county of West-Chester, in the State of New-York, and United States of America, from which fair portion of the globe we send our compliments to all who read our pages—and love to those who buy them.

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THE SPY

THE SPY;

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CHAPTER I

“And though amidst the calm of thought entire,
Some high and haughty features might betray
A soul impetuous once—’twas earthly fire
That fled composure’s intellectual ray,
As Etna’s fires grow dim before the rising day.”

Gertrude of Wyoming

IT was near the close of the year 1780, that a solitary traveller was seen pursuing his way through one of the numerous little valleys of Westchester.* The easterly wind, with its chilling dampness and increasing violence, gave unerring notice of the approach of a storm, which, as usual, might be expected to continue for several days; and the experienced eye of the traveller was turned in vain, through the darkness of

* As each State of the American Union has its own counties, it often happens that there are several which bear the same name. The scene of this tale is in New York, whose county of Westchester is the nearest adjoining the city.

the evening, in quest of some convenient shelter, in which, for the term of his confinement by the rain that already began to mix with the atmosphere in a thick mist, he might obtain such accommodations as his purposes required. Nothing however offered but the small and inconvenient tenements of the lower order of the inhabitants, with whom, in that immediate neighborhood, he did not think it either safe or politic to trust himself.

The county of Westchester, after the British had obtained possession of the island of New York,* became common ground, in which both

* The city of New York is situate on an island called Manhattan; but it is at one point separated from the county of Westchester by a creek of only a few feet in width. The bridge at this spot is called King's Bridge. It was the scene of many skirmishes during the war, and is alluded to in this tale. Every Manhattanese knows the difference between "Manhattan Island" and "the island of Manhattan." The first is applied to a small district in the vicinity of Corlaer's Hook, while the last embraces the whole island; or the city and county of New York, as it is termed in the laws.

parties continued to act for the remainder of the war of the Revolution. A large proportion of its inhabitants, either restrained by their attachments, or influenced by their fears, affected a neutrality they did not feel. The lower towns were, of course, more particularly under the dominion of the crown, while the upper, finding a security from the vicinity of the continental troops, were bold in asserting their revolutionary opinions, and their right to govern themselves. Great numbers, however, wore masks, which even to this day have not been thrown aside; and many an individual has gone down to the tomb, stigmatized as a foe to the rights of his countrymen, while, in secret, he has been the useful agent of the leaders of the Revolution; and, on the other hand, could the hidden repositories of divers flaming patriots have been opened to the light of day, royal protections would have been discovered concealed under piles of British gold.

At the sound of the tread of the noble horse ridden by the traveller, the mistress of the farmhouse he was passing at the time might be seen cautiously opening the door of the building to examine the stranger; and perhaps, with an averted face, communicating the result of her observations to her husband, who, in the rear of the building, was prepared to seek, if necessary, his ordinary place of concealment in the adjacent woods. The valley was situated about midway in the length of the county, and was sufficiently near to both armies to make the restitution of stolen goods no uncommon occurrence in that vicinity. It is true, the same articles were not always regained; but a summary substitute was generally resorted to, in the absence of legal justice, which restored to the loser the amount of his loss, and frequently with no inconsiderable addition for the temporary use of his property. In short, the law was momentarily extinct in that

particular district, and justice was administered subject to the bias of personal interests and the passions of the strongest.

The passage of a stranger, with an appearance of somewhat doubtful character, and mounted on an animal which, although unfurnished with any of the ordinary trappings of war, partook largely of the bold and upright carriage that distinguished his rider, gave rise to many surmises among the gazing inmates of the different habitations; and in some instances, where conscience was more than ordinarily awake, to no little alarm.

Tired with the exercise of a day of unusual fatigue, and anxious to obtain a speedy shelter from the increasing violence of the storm, that now began to change its character to large drops of driving rain, the traveller determined, as a matter of necessity, to make an application for admission to the next dwelling that offered. An

opportunity was not long wanting; and, riding through a pair of neglected bars, he knocked loudly at the outer door of a building of a very humble exterior, without quitting his saddle. A female of middle age, with an outward bearing but little more prepossessing than that of her dwelling, appeared to answer the summons. The startled woman half closed her door again in affright, as she saw, by the glare of a large wood fire, a mounted man so unexpectedly near its threshold; and an expression of terror mingled with her natural curiosity, as she inquired his pleasure.

Although the door was too nearly closed to admit of a minute scrutiny of the accommodations within, enough had been seen to cause the horseman to endeavor, once more, to penetrate the gloom, with longing eyes, in search of a more promising roof, before, with an ill-concealed reluctance, he stated his necessities and



wishes. His request was listened to with evident unwillingness, and, while yet unfinished, it was eagerly interrupted by the reply:—

“I can’t say I like to give lodgings to a stranger in these ticklish times,” said the female, in a pert, sharp key; “I’m nothing but a forlorn lone body; or, what’s the same thing, there’s nobody but the old gentleman at home; but a half mile farther up the road is a house where you can get entertainment, and that for nothing. I am sure ’twill be much convenienter to them, and more agreeable to me—because, as I said before, Harvey is away; I wish he’d take advice, and leave off wandering; he’s well to do in the world, by this time; and he ought to leave off his uncertain courses, and settle himself handsomely in life, like other men of his years and property. But Harvey Birch will have his own way, and die vagabond after all!”

The horseman did not wait to hear more than

the advice to pursue his course up the road; but he had slowly turned his horse toward the bars, and was gathering the folds of an ample cloak around his manly form, preparatory to facing the storm again, when something in the speech of the female suddenly arrested the movement.

“Is this, then, the dwelling of Harvey Birch?” he inquired, in an involuntary manner, apparently checking himself, as he was about to utter more.

“Why, one can hardly say it is his dwelling,” replied the other, drawing a hurried breath, like one eager to answer; “he is never in it, or so seldom, that I hardly remember his face, when he does think it worth his while to show it to his poor old father and me. But it matters little to me, I’m sure, if he ever comes back again, or not;—turn in the first gate on your left;—no, I care but little, for my part, whether Harvey ever shows his face again or not—not I”—and she

closed the door abruptly on the horseman, who gladly extended his ride half a mile farther, to obtain lodgings which promised both more comfort and greater security.

Sufficient light yet remained to enable the traveller to distinguish the improvements* which had been made in the cultivation, and in the general appearance of the grounds around the building to which he was now approaching. The house was of stone, long, low, and with a small wing at each extremity. A piazza, extending along the front, with neatly turned pillars of wood, together with the good order and preservation of the fences and out-buildings, gave the place an air altogether superior to the common farm-houses of the country. After leading his horse behind an angle of the wall, where it was

* Improvements is used by the Americans to express every degree of change in converting land from its state of wildness to that of cultivation. In this meaning of the word, it is an improvement to fell the trees; and it is valued precisely by the supposed amount of the cost.

in some degree protected from the wind and rain, the traveller threw his valise over his arm, and knocked loudly at the entrance of the building for admission. An aged black soon appeared; and without seeming to think it necessary, under the circumstances, to consult his superiors,—first taking one prying look at the applicant, by the light of the candle in his hand,—he acceded to the request for accommodations. The traveller was shown into an extremely neat parlor, where a fire had been lighted to cheer the dulness of an easterly storm and an October evening. After giving the valise into the keeping of his civil attendant, and politely repeating his request to the old gentleman, who arose to receive him, and paying his compliments to the three ladies who were seated at work with their needles, the stranger commenced laying aside some of the outer garments which he had worn in his ride.

On taking an extra handkerchief from his neck, and removing a cloak of blue cloth, with a surtout of the same material, he exhibited to the scrutiny of the observant family party, a tall and extremely graceful person, of apparently fifty years of age. His countenance evinced a settled composure and dignity; his nose was straight, and approaching to Grecian; his eye, of a gray color, was quiet, thoughtful, and rather melancholy; the mouth and lower part of his face being expressive of decision and much character. His dress, being suited to the road, was simple and plain, but such as was worn by the higher class of his countrymen; he wore his own hair, dressed in a manner that gave a military air to his appearance, and which was rather heightened by his erect and conspicuously graceful carriage. His whole appearance was so impressive and so decidedly that of a gentleman, that as he finished laying aside the garments, the ladies

arose from their seats, and together with the master of the house, they received anew, and returned the complimentary greetings which were again offered.

The host was by several years the senior of the traveller, and by his manner, dress, and everything around him, showed he had seen much of life and the best society. The ladies were, a maiden of forty, and two much younger, who did not seem, indeed, to have reached half those years. The bloom of the elder of these ladies had vanished, but her eyes and fine hair gave an extremely agreeable expression to her countenance; and there was a softness and an affability in her deportment, that added a charm many more juvenile faces do not possess. The sisters, for such the resemblance between the younger females denoted them to be, were in all the pride of youth, and the roses, so eminently the property of the Westchester fair, glowed on their cheeks, and

lighted their deep blue eyes with that lustre which gives so much pleasure to the beholder, and which indicates so much internal innocence and peace. There was much that feminine delicacy in the appearance of the three, which distinguishes the sex in this country; and, like the gentleman, their demeanor proved them to be women of the higher order of life.

After handing a glass of excellent Madeira to his guest, Mr. Wharton, for so was the owner of this retired estate called, resumed his seat by the fire, with another in his own hand. For a moment he paused, as if debating with his politeness, but at length threw an inquiring glance on the stranger, as he inquired,—

“To whose health am I to have the honor of drinking?”

The traveller had also seated himself, and he sat unconsciously gazing on the fire, while Mr. Wharton spoke; turning his eyes slowly on his

host with a look of close observation, he replied, while a faint tinge gathered on his features,—

“Mr. Harper.”

“Mr. Harper,” resumed the other, with the formal precision of that day, “I have the honor to drink your health, and to hope you will sustain no injury from the rain to which you have been exposed.”

Mr. Harper bowed in silence to the compliment, and he soon resumed the meditations from which he had been interrupted, and for which the long ride he had that day made, in the wind, might seem a very natural apology.

The young ladies had again taken their seats beside the workstand, while their aunt, Miss Jeanette Peyton, withdrew to superintend the preparations necessary to appease the hunger of their unexpected visitor. A short silence prevailed, during which Mr. Harper was apparently enjoying the change in his situation, when Mr. Whar-

ton again broke it, by inquiring whether smoke was disagreeable to his companion; receiving an answer in the negative, he immediately resumed the pipe which had been laid aside at the entrance of the traveller.

There was an evident desire on the part of the host to enter into conversation, but either from an apprehension of treading on dangerous ground, or an unwillingness to intrude upon the rather studied taciturnity of his guest, he several times hesitated, before he could venture to make any further remark. At length, a movement from Mr. Harper, as he raised his eyes to the party in the room, encouraged him to proceed.

"I find it very difficult," said Mr. Wharton, cautiously avoiding, at first, such subjects as he wished to introduce, "to procure that quality of tobacco for my evenings' amusement, to which I have been accustomed."

"I should think the shops in New York might

furnish the best in the country," calmly rejoined the other.

"Why—yes," returned the host in rather a hesitating manner, lifting his eyes to the face of Harper, and lowering them quickly under his steady look, "there must be plenty in town; but the war has made communication with the city, however innocent, too dangerous to be risked for so trifling an article as tobacco."

The box from which Mr. Wharton had just taken a supply for his pipe was lying open, within a few inches of the elbow of Harper, who took a small quantity from its contents, and applied it to his tongue, in a manner perfectly natural, but one that filled his companion with alarm. Without, however, observing that the quality was of the most approved kind the traveller relieved his host by relapsing again into his meditations. Mr. Wharton now felt unwilling to lose the advantage he had gained, and, making an

effort of more than usual vigor, he continued,—

“I wish, from the bottom of my heart, this unnatural struggle was over, that we might again meet our friends and relatives in peace and love.”

“It is much to be desired,” said Harper, emphatically, again raising his eyes to the countenance of his host.

“I hear of no movement of consequence, since the arrival of our new allies,” said Mr. Wharton, shaking the ashes from his pipe, and turning his back to the other, under the pretence of receiving a coal from his youngest daughter.

“None have yet reached the public, I believe.”

“Is it thought any important steps are about to be taken?” continued Mr. Wharton, still occupied with his daughter, yet unconsciously suspending his employment, in expectation of a reply.

“Is it intimated any are in agitation?”

“Oh! nothing in particular; but it is natural to expect some new enterprise from so powerful a force as that under Rochambeau.”

Harper made an assenting inclination with his head, but no other reply, to this remark; while Mr. Wharton, after lighting his pipe, resumed the subject.

“They appear more active in the South; Gates and Cornwallis seem willing to bring the war to an issue there.”

The brow of Harper contracted, and a deeper shade of melancholy crossed his features; his eye kindled with a transient beam of fire, that spoke a latent source of deep feeling. The admiring gaze of the younger of the sisters had barely time to read its expression, before it passed away, leaving in its room the acquired composure which marked the countenance of the stranger, and that impressive dignity which so conspicuously denotes the empire of reason.

The elder sister made one or two movements in her chair, before she ventured to say, in a tone which partook in no small measure of triumph,—

“General Gates has been less fortunate with the earl, than with General Burgoyne.”

“But General Gates is an Englishman, Sarah,” cried the younger lady, with quickness; then, coloring to the eyes at her own boldness, she employed herself in tumbling over the contents of her work-basket, silently hoping the remark would be unnoticed.

The traveller had turned his face from one sister to the other, as they had spoken in succession, and an almost imperceptible movement of the muscles of his mouth betrayed a new emotion, as he playfully inquired of the younger,—

“May I venture to ask what inference you would draw from that fact?”

Frances blushed yet deeper at this direct appeal to her opinions upon a subject on which she

had incautiously spoken in the presence of a stranger; but finding an answer necessary, after some little hesitation, and with a good deal of stammering in her manner, she replied,—

“Only — only — sir — my sister and myself sometimes differ in our opinions of the prowess of the British.” A smile of much meaning played on a face of infantile innocence, as she concluded.

“On what particular points of their prowess do you differ,” continued Harper, meeting her look of animation with a smile of almost paternal softness.

“Sarah thinks the British are never beaten, while I do not put so much faith in their invincibility.”

The traveller listened to her with that pleased indulgence, with which virtuous age loves to contemplate the ardor of youthful innocence; but making no reply, he turned to the fire, and con-

tinued for some time gazing on its embers, in silence.

Mr. Wharton had in vain endeavored to pierce the disguise of his guest's political feelings; but, while there was nothing forbidding in his countenance, there was nothing communicative; on the contrary it was strikingly reserved; and the master of the house arose, in profound ignorance of what, in those days, was the most material point in the character of his guest, to lead the way into another room, and to the supper-table. Mr. Harper offered his hand to Sarah Wharton, and they entered the room together; while Frances followed, greatly at a loss to know whether she had not wounded the feelings of her father's inmate.

The storm began to rage with great violence without, and the dashing rain on the sides of the building awakened that silent sense of enjoyment, which is excited by such sounds in a room.

of quiet comfort and warmth, when a loud summons at the outer door again called the faithful black to the portal. In a minute the servant returned, and informed his master that another traveller, overtaken by the storm, desired to be admitted to the house for a shelter through the night.

At the first sounds of the impatient summons of this new applicant, Mr. Wharton had risen from his seat in evident uneasiness; and with eyes glancing with quickness from his guest to the door of the room, he seemed to be expecting something to proceed from this second interruption, connected with the stranger who had occasioned the first. He scarcely had time to bid the black, with a faint voice, to show this second comer in, before the door was thrown hastily open, and the stranger himself entered the apartment. He paused a moment, as the person of Harper met his view, and then, in a more for-

mal manner, repeated the request he had before made through the servant. Mr. Wharton and his family disliked the appearance of this new visitor excessively; but the inclemency of the weather, and the uncertainty of the consequences, if he were refused the desired lodgings, compelled the old gentleman to give a reluctant acquiescence.

Some of the dishes were replaced by the orders of Miss Peyton, and the weather-beaten intruder was invited to partake of the remains of the repast, from which the party had just risen. Throwing aside a rough great-coat, he very composedly took the offered chair, and unceremoniously proceeded to allay the cravings of an appetite which appeared by no means delicate. But at every mouthful he would turn an unquiet eye on Harper, who studied his appearance with a closeness of investigation that was very embarrassing to its subject. At length, pouring out a glass of

wine, the new-comer nodded significantly to his examiner, previously to swallowing the liquor, and said, with something of bitterness in his manner,—

“I drink to our better acquaintance, sir; I believe this is the first time we have met, though your attention would seem to say otherwise.”

The quality of the wine seemed greatly to his fancy, for, on replacing the glass upon the table, he gave his lips a smack, that resounded through the room; and, taking up the bottle, he held it between himself and the light, for a moment, in silent contemplation of its clear and brilliant color.

“I think we have never met before, sir,” replied Harper, with a slight smile on his features, as he observed the movements of the other; but appearing satisfied with his scrutiny, he turned to Sarah Wharton, who sat next him, and carelessly remarked,—

"You doubtless find your present abode solitary, after being accustomed to the gayeties of the city."

"Oh! excessively so," said Sarah hastily. "I do wish, with my father, that this cruel war was at an end, that we might return to our friends once more."

"And you, Miss Frances, do you long as ardently for peace as your sister?"

"On many accounts I certainly do," returned the other, venturing to steal a timid glance at her interrogator; and, meeting the same benevolent expression of feeling as before, she continued, as her own face lighted into one of its animated and bright smiles of intelligence, "but not at the expense of the rights of my countrymen."

"Rights!" repeated her sister, impatiently; "whose rights can be stronger than those of a sovereign: and what duty is clearer, than to obey those who have a natural right to command?"

"None, certainly," said Frances, laughing with great pleasantry; and, taking the hand of her sister affectionately within both of her own, she added, with a smile directed towards Harper,—

"I gave you to understand that my sister and myself differed in our political opinions; but we have an impartial umpire in my father, who loves his own countrymen, and he loves the British,—so he takes sides with neither."

"Yes," said Mr. Wharton, in a little alarm, eyeing first one guest, and then the other; "I have near friends in both armies, and I dread a victory by either, as a source of certain private misfortune."

"I take it, you have little reason to apprehend much from the Yankees, in that way," interrupted the guest at the table, coolly helping himself to another glass, from the bottle he had admired.

“His majesty may have more experienced troops than the continentals,” answered the host, fearfully, “but the Americans have met with distinguished success.”

Harper disregarded the observations of both; and, rising, he desired to be shown to his place of rest. A small boy was directed to guide him to his room; and wishing a courteous good night to the whole party, the traveller withdrew. The knife and fork fell from the hands of the unwelcome intruder, as the door closed on the retiring figure of Harper; he arose slowly from his seat; listening attentively, he approached the door of the room—opened it—seemed to attend to the retreating footsteps of the other—and, amidst the panic and astonishment of his companions, he closed it again. In an instant, the red wig which concealed his black locks, the large patch which hid half his face from observation, the stoop that had made him appear fifty years of age, disappeared.

“My father!—my dear father!”—cried the handsome young man; “and you, my dearest sisters and aunt—have I at last met you again?”

“Heaven bless you, my Henry, my son!” exclaimed the astonished but delighted parent; while his sisters sunk on his shoulders, dissolved in tears.

The faithful old black, who had been reared from infancy in the house of his master, and who, as if in mockery of his degraded state, had been complimented with the name of Cæsar, was the only other witness of this unexpected discovery of the son of Mr. Wharton. After receiving the extended hand of his young master, and imprinting on it a fervent kiss, Cæsar withdrew. The boy did not re-enter the room; and the black himself, after some time, returned, just as the young British captain was exclaiming,—

“But who is this Mr. Harper?—is he likely to betray me?”

“No, no, no, Massa Harry,” cried the negro, shaking his gray head confidently; “I been to see—Massa Harper on he knee—pray to God—no gemman who pray to God tell of good son, come to see old father—Skinner do that—no Christian!”

This poor opinion of the Skinners was not confined to Mr. Cæsar Thompson, as he called himself,—but Cæsar Wharton, as he was styled by the little world to which he was known. The convenience, and perhaps, the necessities, of the leaders of the American arms, in the neighborhood of New York, had induced them to employ certain subordinate agents, of extremely irregular habits, in executing their lesser plans of annoying the enemy. It was not a moment for fastidious inquiries into abuses of any description, and oppression and injustice were the natural consequences of the possession of a military power that was uncurbed by the restraints of

civil authority. In time, a distinct order of the community was formed, whose sole occupation appears to have been that of relieving their fellow-citizens from any little excess of temporal prosperity they might be thought to enjoy, under the pretence of patriotism, and the love of liberty.

Occasionally, the aid of military authority was not wanting, in enforcing these arbitrary distributions of worldly goods; and a petty holder of a commission in the State militia was to be seen giving the sanction of something like legality to acts of the most unlicenced robbery, and, not unfrequently, of bloodshed.

On the part of the British, the stimulus of loyalty was by no means suffered to sleep, where so fruitful a field offered, on which it might be expended. But their freebooters were enrolled, and their efforts more systematized. Long experience had taught their leaders the efficacy of

concentrated force; and, unless tradition does great injustice to their exploits, the result did no little credit to their foresight. The corps—we presume, from their known affection to that useful animal—have received the quaint appellation of “Cow-Boys.”

Cæsar was, however, far too loyal to associate men who held the commission of George III., with the irregular warriors, whose excesses he had so often witnessed, and from whose rapacity, neither his poverty nor his bondage had suffered even him to escape uninjured. The Cow-Boys, therefore, did not receive their proper portion of the black’s censure, when he said, no Christian, nothing but a “Skinner,” could betray a pious child, while honoring his father with a visit so full of peril.

CHAPTER II

“And many a halcyon day he lived to see
Unbroken, but by one misfortune dire,
When fate had reft his mutual heart—but she
Was gone—and Gertrude climbed a widowed father’s knee.”

Gertrude of Wyoming

THE father of Mr. Wharton was a native of England, and of a family whose parliamentary interest had enabled them to provide for a younger son in the colony of New York. The young man, like hundreds of others in his situation, had settled permanently in the country. He married; and the sole issue of his connection had been sent early in life to receive the benefits of the English schools. After taking his degrees at one of the universities of the mother-country, the youth had been suffered to acquire a knowledge of life with the advantages of European society. But the death of his father recalled him, after passing two years in this manner, to the possession of an honorable name, and a very ample estate.

It was much the fashion of that day to place the youth of certain families in the army or navy of England, as the regular stepping-stones to preferment. Most of the higher offices of the colonies were filled by men who had made arms their profession; and it was even no uncommon sight to see a veteran warrior laying aside the sword to assume the ermine on the benches of the highest judicial authority.

In conformity with this system, the senior Mr. Wharton had intended his son for a soldier; but a natural imbecility of character in his child interfered with his wishes.

A twelvemonth had been spent by the young man in weighing the comparative advantages of the different classes of troops, when the death of his father occurred. The ease of his situation, and the attentions lavished upon a youth in the actual enjoyment of one of the largest estates in the colonies, interfered greatly with his ambi-

tious projects. Love decided the matter; and Mr. Wharton, in becoming a husband, ceased to think of becoming a soldier. For many years he continued happy in his family, and sufficiently respected by his countrymen, as a man of integrity and consequence, when all his enjoyments vanished, as it were, at a blow. His only son, the youth introduced in the preceding chapter, had entered the army, and had arrived in his native country, but a short time before the commencement of hostilities, with the reinforcements the ministry had thought it prudent to throw into the disaffected parts of North America. His daughters were just growing into life, and their education required all the advantages the city could afford. His wife had been for some years in declining health, and had barely time to fold her son to her bosom, and rejoice in the reunion of her family, before the Revolution burst forth, in a continued blaze, from Georgia to Massa-

chusetts. The shock was too much for the feeble condition of the mother, who saw her child called to the field to combat against the members of her own family in the South, and she sunk under the blow.

There was no part of the continent where the manners of England, and its aristocratical notions of blood and alliances, prevailed with more force than in a certain circle immediately around the metropolis of New York. The customs of the early Dutch inhabitants had, indeed, blended in some measure with the English manners; but still the latter prevailed. This attachment to Great Britain was increased by the frequent intermarriages of the officers of the mother-country with the wealthier and most powerful families of the vicinity, until, at the commencement of hostilities, their united influence had very nearly thrown the colony into the scale on the side of the crown. A few, however, of the lead-

ing families espoused the cause of the people; and a sufficient stand was made against the efforts of the ministerial party, to organize, and, aided by the army of the confederation, to maintain, an independent and republican form of government.

The city of New York and the adjacent territory were alone exempted from the rule of the new commonwealth; while the loyal authority extended no farther than its dignity could be supported by the presence of an army. In this condition of things, the loyalists of influence adopted such measures as best accorded with their different characters and situations. Many bore arms in support of the crown, and, by their bravery and exertions, endeavored to secure what they deemed to be the rights of their prince, and their own estates from the effects of the law of attainder. Others left the country; seeking in that place they emphatically called home, an asylum,

as they fondly hoped, for a season only, against the confusion and dangers of war. A third, and a more wary portion, remained in the place of their nativity, with a prudent regard to their ample possessions, and, perhaps, influenced by their attachments to the scenes of their youth. Mr. Wharton was of this description. After making a provision against future contingencies, by secretly transmitting the whole of his money to the British funds, this gentleman determined to continue in the theatre of strife, and to maintain so strict a neutrality as to insure the safety of his large estate, whichever party succeeded. He was apparently engrossed in the education of his daughters, when a relation, high in office in the new State, intimated that a residence in what was now a British camp differed but little, in the eyes of his countrymen, from a residence in the British capital. Mr. Wharton soon saw this was an unpardonable offence in the existing state of

things, and he instantly determined to remove the difficulty, by retiring to the country. He possessed a residence in the county of Westchester; and having been for many years in the habit of withdrawing thither during the heats of the summer months, it was kept furnished, and ready for his accommodation. His eldest daughter was already admitted into the society of women; but Frances, the younger, required a year or two more of the usual cultivation, to appear with proper *éclat*; at least so thought Miss Jeanette Peyton; and as this lady, a younger sister of their deceased mother, had left her paternal home, in the colony of Virginia, with the devotedness and affection peculiar to her sex, to superintend the affairs of her orphaned nieces, Mr. Wharton felt that her opinions were entitled to respect. In conformity to her advice, therefore, the feelings of the parent were made to yield to the welfare of his children.

Mr. Wharton withdrew to the Locusts, with a heart rent with the pain of separating from all that was left him of a wife he had adored, but in obedience to a constitutional prudence that pleaded loudly in behalf of his worldly goods. His handsome town residence was inhabited, in the meanwhile, by his daughters and their aunt. The regiment to which Captain Wharton belonged formed part of the permanent garrison of the city; and the knowledge of the presence of his son was no little relief to the father, in his unceasing meditations on his absent daughters. But Captain Wharton was a young man and a soldier; his estimate of character was not always the wisest; and his propensities led him to imagine that a red coat never concealed a dishonorable heart.

The house of Mr. Wharton became a fashionable lounge to the officers of the royal army, as did that of every other family that was thought

worthy of their notice. The consequences of this association were, to some few of the visited, fortunate; to more, injurious, by exciting expectations which were never to be realized, and, unhappily, to no small number ruinous. The known wealth of the father, and, possibly, the presence of a high-spirited brother, forbade any apprehension of the latter danger to the young ladies: but it was impossible that all the admiration bestowed on the fine figure and lovely face of Sarah Wharton should be thrown away. Her person was formed with the early maturity of the climate, and a strict cultivation of the graces had made her decidedly the belle of the city. No one promised to dispute with her this female sovereignty, unless it might be her younger sister. Frances, however, wanted some months to the charmed age of sixteen; and the idea of competition was far from the minds of either of the affectionate girls. Indeed, next to the conversation

of Colonel Wellmere, the greatest pleasure of Sarah was in contemplating the budding beauties of the little Hebe, who played around her with all the innocence of youth, with all the enthusiasm of her ardent temper, and with no little of the archness of her native humor. Whether or not it was owing to the fact that Frances received none of the compliments which fell to the lot of her elder sister, in the often repeated discussions on the merits of the war, between the military beaux who frequented the house, it is certain their effects on the sisters were exactly opposite. It was much the fashion then for the British officers to speak slightly of their enemies; and Sarah took all the idle vapping of her dangles to be truths. The first political opinions which reached the ears of Frances were coupled with sneers on the conduct of her countrymen. At first she believed them; but there was occasionally a general, who was obliged to do

justice to his enemy in order to obtain justice for himself; and Frances became somewhat skeptical on the subject of the inefficiency of her countrymen. Colonel Wellmere was among those who delighted most in expending his wit on the unfortunate Americans; and, in time, Frances began to listen to his eloquence with great suspicion, and sometimes with resentment.

It was a hot, sultry day, that the three were in the parlor of Mr. Wharton's house, the colonel and Sarah seated on a sofa, engaged in a combat of the eyes, aided by the usual flow of small talk, and Frances was occupied at her tambour-frame, in an opposite corner of the room, when the gentleman suddenly exclaimed,—

“How gay the arrival of the army under General Burgoyne will make the city, Miss Wharton!”

“Oh! how pleasant it must be,” said the thoughtless Sarah, in reply; “I am told there are

many charming women with that army; as you say, it will make us all life and gayety."

Frances shook back the abundance of her golden hair, and raised her eyes, dancing with the ardor of national feeling; then laughing, with a concealed humor, she asked,—

"Is it so certain that General Burgoyne will be permitted to reach the city?"

"Permitted!" echoed the colonel, "who is there to prevent it, my pretty Miss Fanny?"

Frances was precisely at that age when young people are most jealous of their station in society; neither quite a woman, nor yet a child. The "pretty Miss Fanny" was too familiar to be relished, and she dropped her eyes on her work again, with cheeks that glowed with crimson.

"General Stark took the Germans into custody," she answered, compressing her lip; "may not General Gates think the British too dangerous to go at large?"

"Oh! they were Germans, as you say," cried the colonel, excessively vexed at the necessity of explaining at all; "mere mercenary troops; but when the really British regiments come in question, you will see a very different result."

"Of that there is no doubt," cried Sarah, without in the least partaking of the resentment of the colonel to her sister, but hailing already in her heart the triumph of the British.

"Pray, Colonel Wellmere," said Frances, recovering her good-humor, and raising her joyous eyes once more to the face of the gentleman, "was the Lord Percy of Lexington a kinsman of him who fought at Chevy Chace?"

"Why, Miss Fanny, you are becoming a rebel," said the colonel, endeavoring to laugh away the anger he felt; "what you are pleased to insinuate was a chase at Lexington, was nothing more than a judicious retreat—a—kind of—"

"Running fight," interrupted the good-hu-

mored girl, laying great emphasis on the first word.

“Positively, young lady—” Colonel Wellmere was interrupted by a laugh from a person who had hitherto been unnoticed.

There was a small family apartment adjoining the room occupied by the trio, and the air had blown open the door communicating between the two. A fine young man was now seen sitting near the entrance, who, by his smiling countenance, was evidently a pleased listener to the conversation. He rose instantly, and coming through the door, with his hat in his hand, appeared a tall, graceful youth, of dark complexion, and sparkling eyes of black, from which the mirth had not yet entirely vanished, as he made his bow to the ladies.

“Mr. Dunwoodie!” cried Sarah, in surprise; “I was ignorant of your being in the house; you will find a cooler seat in this room.”

“I thank you,” replied the young man, “but I

must go and seek your brother, who placed me there in ambuscade, as he called it, with a promise of returning an hour ago." Without making any further explanation, the youth bowed politely to the young women, distantly and with hauteur to the gentleman, and withdrew. Frances followed him into the hall, and blushing richly, inquired, in a hurried voice,—

"But why—why do you leave us, Mr. Dunwoodie? Henry must soon return."

The gentleman caught one of her hands in his own, and the stern expression of his countenance gave place to a look of admiration as he replied,—

"You manage him famously, my dear little kinswoman; never—no, never, forget the land of your birth; remember, if you are the granddaughter of an Englishman, you are, also, the granddaughter of a Peyton."

"Oh!" returned the laughing girl, "it would

be difficult to forget that, with the constant lectures on genealogy before us, with which we are favored by Aunt Jeanette; but why do you go?"

"I am on the wing for Virginia, and have much to do." He pressed her hand as he spoke, and looking back, while in the act of closing the door, exclaimed, "Be true to your country—be American." The ardent girl kissed her hand to him as he retired, and then instantly applying it with its beautiful fellow to her burning cheeks, ran into her own apartment to hide her confusion.

Between the open sarcasm of Frances, and the ill-concealed disdain of the young man, Colonel Wellmere had felt himself placed in an awkward predicament; but ashamed to resent such trifles in the presence of his mistress, he satisfied himself with observing, superciliously, as Dunwoodie left the room,—

"Quite a liberty for a youth in his situation; a shop-boy with a bundle, I fancy."

The idea of picturing the graceful Peyton Dunwoodie as a shop-boy could never enter the mind of Sarah, and she looked around her in surprise, when the colonel continued,—

“This Mr. Dun—Dun—”

“Dunwoodie! Oh, no—he is a relation of my aunt,” cried the young lady, “and an intimate friend of my brother; they were at school together, and only separated in England, when one went into the army, and the other to a French military academy.”

“His money appears to have been thrown away,” observed the colonel, betraying the spleen he was unsuccessfully striving to conceal.

“We ought to hope so,” added Sarah, with a smile, “for it is said he intends joining the rebel army. He was brought in here in a French ship, and has just been exchanged; you may soon meet him in arms.”

“Well, let him—I wish Washington plenty

of such heroes"; and he turned to a more pleasant subject, by changing the discourse to themselves.

A few weeks after this scene occurred, the army of Burgoyne laid down their arms. Mr. Wharton, beginning to think the result of the contest doubtful, resolved to conciliate his countrymen, and gratify himself, by calling his daughters into his own abode. Miss Peyton consented to be their companion; and from that time, until the period at which we commenced our narrative, they had formed one family.

Whenever the main army made any movements, Captain Wharton had, of course, accompanied it; and once or twice, under the protection of strong parties, acting in the neighborhood of the Locusts, he had enjoyed rapid and stolen interviews with his friends. A twelve-month had, however, passed without his seeing them; and the impatient Henry had adopted the

disguise we have mentioned, and unfortunately arrived on the very evening that an unknown and rather suspicious guest was an inmate of the house, which seldom contained any other than its regular inhabitants.

“But do you think he suspects me?” asked the captain, with anxiety, after pausing to listen to Cæsar’s opinion of the Skinners.

“How should he?” cried Sarah, “when your sisters and father could not penetrate your disguise.”

“There is something mysterious in his manner; his looks are too prying for an indifferent observer,” continued young Wharton, thoughtfully, “and his face seems familiar to me. The recent fate of André has created much irritation on both sides. Sir Henry threatens retaliation for his death; and Washington is as firm as if half the world were at his command. The rebels would think me a fit subject for their plans just

now, should I be so unlucky as to fall into their hands."

"But, my son," cried his father, in great alarm, "you are not a spy; you are not within the rebel—that is, the American lines; there is nothing here to spy."

"That might be disputed," rejoined the young man, musing; "their pickets were as low as the White Plains when I passed through in disguise. It is true my purposes are innocent; but how is it to appear? My visit to you would seem a cloak to other designs. Remember, sir, the treatment you received not a year since, for sending me a supply of fruit for the winter."

"That proceeded from the misrepresentations of my kind neighbors," said Mr. Wharton, "who hoped, by getting my estate confiscated, to purchase good farms at low prices. Peyton Dunwoodie, however, soon obtained our discharge; we were detained but a month."

"We!" repeated the son, in amazement; "did they take my sisters, also? Fanny, you wrote me nothing of this."

"I believe," said Frances, coloring highly, "I mentioned the kind treatment we received from your old friend, Major Dunwoodie; and that he procured my father's release."

"True; but were you with him in the rebel camp?"

"Yes," said the father, kindly; "Fanny would not suffer me to go alone. Jeanette and Sarah took charge of the Locusts, and this little girl was my companion, in captivity."

"And Fanny returned from such a scene a greater rebel than ever," cried Sarah, indignantly; "one would think the hardships her father suffered would have cured her of such whims."

"What say you to the charge, my pretty sister?" cried the captain gayly; "did Peyton strive

to make you hate your king, more than he does himself?"

"Peyton Dunwoodie hates no one," said Frances, quickly; then, blushing at her own ardor, she added immediately, "he loves you, Henry, I know; for he has told me so again and again."

Young Wharton tapped his sister on the cheek, with a smile, as he asked her, in an affected whisper, "Did he tell you also that he loved my little sister Fanny?"

"Nonsense!" said Frances; and the remnants of the supper-table soon disappeared under her superintendence.

CHAPTER III

“ 'Twas when the fields were swept of Autumn's store,
And growling winds the fading foliage tore,
Behind the Lowmon hill, the short-lived light,
Descending slowly, ushered in the night;
When from the noisy town, with mournful look,
His lonely way the meagre pedler took.”

WILSON

A STORM below the highlands of the Hudson, if it be introduced with an easterly wind, seldom lasts less than two days. Accordingly, as the inmates of the Locusts assembled, on the following morning, around their early breakfast, the driving rain was seen to strike in nearly horizontal lines against the windows of the building, and forbade the idea of exposing either man or beast to the tempest. Harper was the last to appear: after taking a view of the state of the weather, he apologized to Mr. Wharton for the necessity that existed for his trespassing on his goodness for a longer time. To appearances, the reply was as courteous as the

excuse; yet Harper wore a resignation in his deportment that was widely different from the uneasy manner of the father. Henry Wharton had resumed his disguise with a reluctance amounting to disgust, but in obedience to the commands of his parent. No communications passed between him and the stranger, after the first salutations of the morning had been paid by Harper to him, in common with the rest of the family. Frances had, indeed, thought there was something like a smile passing over the features of the traveller, when, on entering the room, he first confronted her brother; but it was confined to the eyes, seeming to want power to affect the muscles of the face, and was soon lost in the settled and benevolent expression which reigned in his countenance, with a sway but seldom interrupted. The eyes of the affectionate sister were turned in anxiety, for a moment, on her brother, and glancing again on their unknown guest, met

his look, as he offered her, with marked attention, one of the little civilities of the table; and the heart of the girl, which had begun to throb with violence, regained a pulsation as tempered as youth, health, and buoyant spirits could allow. While yet seated at the table, Cæsar entered, and laying a small parcel in silence by the side of his master, modestly retired behind his chair, where, placing one hand on its back, he continued in an attitude half familiar, half respectful, a listener.

“What is this, Cæsar?” inquired Mr. Wharton, turning the bundle over to examine its envelope, and eyeing it rather suspiciously.

“The ’baccy, sir; Harvey Birch, he got home, and he bring you a little good ’baccy from York.”

“Harvey Birch!” rejoined the master with great deliberation, stealing a look at his guest. “I do not remember desiring him to purchase

any tobacco for me; but as he has brought it, he must be paid for his trouble."

For an instant only, as the negro spoke, did Harper suspend his silent meal; his eye moved slowly from the servant to the master, and again all remained in impenetrable reserve.

To Sarah Wharton, this intelligence gave unexpected pleasure; rising from her seat with impatience, she bade the black show Birch into the apartment; when, suddenly recollecting herself, she turned to the traveller with an apologizing look, and added, "If Mr. Harper will excuse the presence of a pedler."

The indulgent benevolence expressed in the countenance of the stranger, as he bowed a silent acquiescence, spoke more eloquently than the nicest framed period, and the young lady repeated her order, with a confidence in its truth that removed all embarrassment.

In the deep recesses of the windows of the cot-

tage were seats of panelled work: and the rich damask curtains, that had ornamented the parlor in Queen Street,* had been transferred to the Locusts, and gave to the room that indescribable air of comfort, which so gratefully announces the approach of a domestic winter. Into one of these recesses Captain Wharton now threw himself, drawing the curtain before him in such a manner as to conceal most of his person from observation; while his younger sister, losing her natural frankness of manner, in an air of artificial constraint, silently took possession of the other.

Harvey Birch had been a pedler from his youth; at least so he frequently asserted, and his

* The Americans changed the names of many towns and streets at the Revolution, as has since been done in France. Thus, in the city of New York, Crown Street has become Liberty Street; King Street, Pine Street; and Queen Street, then one of the most fashionable quarters of the town, Pearl Street. Pearl Street is now chiefly occupied by the auction dealers, and the wholesale dry-goods merchants, for warehouses and counting-rooms.

skill in the occupation went far to prove the truth of the declaration. He was a native of one of the eastern colonies; and, from something of superior intelligence which belonged to his father, it was thought they had known better fortunes in the land of their nativity. Harvey possessed, however, the common manners of the country, and was in no way distinguished from men of his class, but by his acuteness, and the mystery which enveloped his movements. Ten years before, they had arrived together in the vale, and, purchasing the humble dwelling at which Harper had made his unsuccessful application, continued ever since peaceful inhabitants, but little noticed and but little known. Until age and infirmities had prevented, the father devoted himself to the cultivation of the small spot of ground belonging to his purchase, while the son pursued with avidity his humble barter. Their orderly quietude had soon given them so

much consideration in the neighborhood, as to induce a maiden of five-and-thirty to forget the punctilio of her sex, and to accept the office of presiding over their domestic comforts. The roses had long before vanished from the cheeks of Katy Haynes, and she had seen in succession, both her male and female acquaintances forming the union so desirable to her sex, with but little or no hope left for herself, when, with views of her own, she entered the family of the Birches. Necessity is a hard master, and, for the want of a better companion, the father and son were induced to accept her services; but still Katy was not wanting in some qualities which made her a very tolerable housekeeper. On the one hand, she was neat, industrious, honest, and a good manager. On the other, she was talkative, selfish, superstitious, and inquisitive. By dint of using the latter quality with consummate industry, she had not lived in the family five years when she

triumphantly declared that she had heard, or rather overheard, sufficient to enable her to say what had been the former fate of her associates. Could Katy have possessed enough of divination to pronounce upon their future lot, her task would have been accomplished. From the private conversations of the parent and child, she learned that a fire had reduced them from competence to poverty, and at the same time diminished the number of their family to two. There was a tremulousness in the voice of the father, as he touched lightly on the event, which affected even the heart of Katy; but no barrier is sufficient to repel vulgar curiosity. She persevered, until a very direct intimation from Harvey, by threatening to supply her place with a female a few years younger than herself, gave her awful warning that there were bounds beyond which she was not to pass. From that period the curiosity of the housekeeper had been

held in such salutary restraint, that, although no opportunity of listening was ever neglected, she had been able to add but little to her stock of knowledge. There was, however, one piece of intelligence, and that of no little interest to herself, which she had succeeded in obtaining; and from the moment of its acquisition, she directed her energies to the accomplishment of one object, aided by the double stimulus of love and avarice.

Harvey was in the frequent habit of paying mysterious visits in the depth of the night, to the fireplace of the apartment that served for both kitchen and parlor. Here he was observed by Katy; and availing herself of his absence, and the occupations of the father, by removing one of the hearth-stones, she discovered an iron pot, glittering with a metal that seldom fails to soften the hardest heart. Katy succeeded in replacing the stone without discovery, and never dared to

trust herself with another visit. From that moment, however, the heart of the virgin lost its obduracy; and nothing interposed between Harvey and his happiness, but his own want of observation.

The war did not interfere with the traffic of the pedler, who seized on the golden opportunity which the interruption of the regular trade afforded, and appeared absorbed in the one grand object of amassing money. For a year or two his employment was uninterrupted, and his success proportionate; but, at length, dark and threatening hints began to throw suspicion around his movements, and the civil authority thought it incumbent on them to examine narrowly into his mode of life. His imprisonments, though frequent, were not long; and his escapes from the guardians of the law easy, compared to what he endured from the persecution of the military. Still Birch survived, and still he con-

tinued his trade, though compelled to be very guarded in his movements, especially whenever he approached the northern boundaries of the county; or in other words, the neighborhood of the American lines. His visits to the Locusts had become less frequent, and his appearance at his own abode so seldom, as to draw forth from the disappointed Katy, in the fulness of her heart, the complaint we have related, in her reply to Harper. Nothing, however, seemed to interfere with the pursuits of this indefatigable trader, who, with a view to dispose of certain articles for which he could only find purchasers in the very wealthiest families of the county, had now braved the fury of the tempest, and ventured to cross the half mile between his own residence and the house of Mr. Wharton.

In a few minutes after receiving the commands of his young mistress, Cæsar reappeared, ushering into the apartment the subject of the

foregoing digression. In person the pedler was a man above the middle height, spare, but full of bone and muscle. At first sight, his strength seemed unequal to manage the unwieldy burden of his pack; yet he threw it on and off with great dexterity, and with as much apparent ease as if it had been filled with feathers. His eyes were gray, sunken, restless, and, for the flitting moments that they dwelt on the countenances of those with whom he conversed, they seemed to read the very soul. They possessed, however, two distinct expressions, which, in a great measure, characterized the whole man. When engaged in traffic, the intelligence of his face appeared lively, active, and flexible, though uncommonly acute; if the conversation turned on the ordinary transactions of life, his air became abstracted and restless; but if, by chance, the Revolution and the country were the topic, his whole system seemed altered—all his faculties were

concentrated: he would listen for a great length of time, without speaking, and then would break silence by some light and jocular remark, that was too much at variance with his former manner, not to be affectation. But of the war, and of his father, he seldom spoke, and always from some very obvious necessity. .

To a superficial observer, avarice would seem his ruling passion—and, all things considered, he was as unfit a subject for the plans of Katy Haynes as can be readily imagined. On entering the room, the pedler relieved himself from his burden, which, as it stood on the floor, reached nearly to his shoulders, and saluted the family with modest civility. To Harper he made a silent bow, without lifting his eyes from the carpet: but the curtain prevented any notice of the presence of Captain Wharton. Sarah gave but little time for the usual salutations, before she commenced her survey of the contents of the

pack; and, for several minutes, the two were engaged in bringing to light the various articles it contained. The tables, chairs, and floor were soon covered with silks, crapes, gloves, muslins, and all the stock of an itinerant trader. Cæsar was employed to hold open the mouth of the pack, as its hoards were discharged, and occasionally he aided his young lady by directing her admiration to some article of finery, which, from its deeper contrast in colors, he thought more worthy of her notice. At length, Sarah, having selected several articles, and satisfactorily arranged the prices, observed in a cheerful voice,—

“But, Harvey, you have told us no news. Has Lord Cornwallis beaten the rebels again?”

The question could not have been heard; for the pedler, burying his body in the pack, brought forth a quantity of lace of exquisite fineness, and, holding it up to view, he required the admira-

tion of the young lady. Miss Peyton dropped the cup she was engaged in washing, from her hand; and Frances exhibited the whole of that lovely face, which had hitherto only suffered one of its joyous eyes to be seen, beaming with a color that shamed the damask which enviously concealed her figure.

The aunt quitted her employment; and Birch soon disposed of a large portion of this valuable article. The praises of the ladies had drawn the whole person of the younger sister into view; and Frances was slowly rising from the window, as Sarah repeated her question, with an exultation in her voice, that proceeded more from pleasure in her purchase, than her political feelings. The younger sister resumed her seat, apparently examining the state of the clouds, while the pedler, finding a reply was expected, answered slowly,—

“There is some talk, below, about Tarleton

having defeated General Sumter, on the Tiger River."

Captain Wharton now involuntarily thrust his head between the opening of the curtains into the room; and Frances, turning her ear in breathless silence, noticed the quiet eyes of Harper looking at the pedler, over the book he was affecting to read, with an expression that denoted him to be a listener of no ordinary interest.

"Indeed!" cried the exulting Sarah; "Sumter—Sumter—who is he? I'll not buy even a pin, until you tell me all the news," she continued, laughing and throwing down a muslin she had been examining.

For a moment the pedler hesitated; his eye glanced towards Harper, who was yet gazing at him with settled meaning, and the whole manner of Birch was altered. Approaching the fire, he took from his mouth a large allowance of the

Virginian weed, and depositing it, with the superabundance of its juices, without mercy to Miss Peyton's shining andirons, he returned to his goods.

"He lives somewhere among the niggers to the South," answered the pedler, abruptly.

"No more nigger than be yourself, Mister Birch," interrupted Cæsar tartly, dropping at the same time the covering of the goods in high displeasure.

"Hush, Cæsar—hush; never mind it now," said Sarah Wharton soothingly, impatient to hear further.

"A black man so good as white, Miss Sally," continued the offended negro, "so long as he behave heself."

"And frequently he is much better," rejoined his mistress: "but Harvey, who is this Mr. Sumter?"

A slight indication of humor showed itself on

the face of the pedler, but it disappeared, and he continued as if the discourse had met with no interruption from the sensitiveness of the domestic.

"As I was saying, he lives among the colored people in the South"—Cæsar resumed his occupation—"and he has lately had a skirmish with this Colonel Tarleton—"

"Who defeated him of course?" cried Sarah, with confidence.

"So say the troops at Morrisania."

"But what do you say?" Mr. Wharton ventured to inquire, yet speaking in a low tone.

"I repeat but what I hear," said Birch, offering a piece of cloth to the inspection of Sarah, who rejected it in silence, evidently determined to hear more before she made another purchase.

"They say, however, at the Plains," the pedler continued, first throwing his eyes again around the room, and letting them rest for an instant on Harper, "that Sumter and one or two more were

all that were hurt, and that the rig'lars were all cut to pieces, for the militia were fixed snugly in a log barn."

"Not very probable," said Sarah, contemptuously, "though I make no doubt the rebels got behind the logs."

"I think," said the pedler, coolly, again offering the silk, "it's quite ingenious to get a log between one and a gun, instead of getting between a gun and a log."

The eyes of Harper dropped quietly on the pages of the volume in his hand, while Frances, rising, came forward with a smile in her face, as she inquired, in a tone of affability that the pedler had never before witnessed from the younger sister,—

"Have you more of the lace, Mr. Birch?"

The desired article was immediately produced, and Frances became a purchaser also. By her order a glass of liquor was offered to the

trader, who took it with thanks, and, having paid his compliments to the master of the house and the ladies, drank the beverage.

"So, it is thought that Colonel Tarleton has worsted General Sumter?" said Mr. Wharton, affecting to be employed in mending the cup that was broken by the eagerness of his sister-in-law.

"I believe they think so at Morrisania," said Birch, dryly.

"Have you any other news, friend?" asked Captain Wharton, venturing to thrust his face without the curtains again.

"Have you heard that Major André has been hanged?"

Captain Wharton started, and for a moment glances of great significance were exchanged between him and the trader, when he observed, with affected indifference, "That must have been weeks ago."

"Does his execution make much noise?" asked the father, striving to make the broken china unite.

"People will talk, you know, 'squire."

"Is there any probability of movements below, my friend, that will make travelling dangerous?" asked Harper, looking steadily at the other, in expectation of his reply.

Some bunches of ribbons fell from the hands of Birch; his countenance changed instantly, losing its keen expression in intent meaning, as he answered slowly, "It is some time since the regular cavalry were out, and I saw some of De Lancey's men cleaning their arms, as I passed their quarters; it would be no wonder if they took the scent soon, for the Virginia horse are low in the county."

"Are they in much force?" asked Mr. Wharton, suspending all employment in anxiety.

"I did not count them."

Frances was the only observer of the change in the manner of Birch, and, on turning to Harper, he had resumed his book in silence. She took some of the ribbons in her hand—laid them down again—and, bending over the goods, so that her hair, falling in rich curls, shaded her face, she observed, blushing with a color that suffused her neck,—

“I thought the Southern horse had marched towards the Delaware.”

“It may be so,” said Birch; “I passed the troops at a distance.”

Cæsar had now selected a piece of calico, in which the gaudy colors of yellow and red were contrasted on a white ground, and, after admiring it for several minutes, he laid it down with a sigh, as he exclaimed, “Berry pretty calico.”

“That,” said Sarah; “yes, that would make a proper gown for your wife, Cæsar.”

“Yes, Miss Sally,” cried the delighted black,

"it make old Dinah heart leap for joy—so berry genteel."

"Yes," added the pedler, quaintly, "that is only wanting to make Dinah look like a rainbow."

Cæsar eyed his young mistress eagerly, until she inquired of Harvey the price of the article.

"Why, much as I light of chaps," said the pedler.

"How much?" demanded Sarah in surprise.

"According to my luck in finding purchasers; for my friend Dinah, you may have it at four shillings."

"It is too much," said Sarah, turning to some goods for herself.

"Monstrous price for coarse calico, Mister Birch," grumbled Cæsar, dropping the opening of the pack again.

"We will say three, then," added the pedler, "if you like that better."

"Be sure he like 'em better," said Cæsar, smiling good-humoredly, and reopening the pack; "Miss Sally like a t'ree shilling when she give, and a four shilling when she take."

The bargain was immediately concluded; but in measuring, the cloth wanted a little of the well-known ten yards required by the dimensions of Dinah. By dint of a strong arm, however, it grew to the desired length, under the experienced eye of the pedler, who conscientiously added a ribbon of corresponding brilliancy with the calico; and Cæsar hastily withdrew, to communicate the joyful intelligence to his aged partner.

During the movements created by the conclusion of the purchase, Captain Wharton had ventured to draw aside the curtain, so as to admit a view of his person, and he now inquired of the pedler, who had begun to collect the scattered goods, at what time he had left the city.

"At early twilight," was the answer.

"So lately!" cried the other in surprise: and then correcting his manner by assuming a more guarded air, he continued, "could you pass the pickets at so late an hour?"

"I did," was the laconic reply.

"You must be well known by this time, Harvey, to the officers of the British army," cried Sarah, smiling knowingly on the pedler.

"I know some of them by sight," said Birch, glancing his eyes round the apartment, taking in their course Captain Wharton, and resting for an instant on the countenance of Harper.

Mr. Wharton had listened intently to each speaker, in succession, and had so far lost the affectation of indifference, as to be crushing in his hand the pieces of china on which he had expended so much labor in endeavoring to mend it; when, observing the pedler tying the last knot in his pack, he asked abruptly,—

"Are we about to be disturbed again with the enemy?"

"Who do you call the enemy?" said the pedler, raising himself erect, and giving the other a look, before which the eyes of Mr. Wharton sunk in instant confusion.

"All are enemies who disturb our peace," said Miss Peyton, observing that her brother was unable to speak. "But are the royal troops out from below?"

"'Tis quite likely they soon may be," returned Birch, raising his pack from the floor, and preparing to leave the room.

"And the continentals," continued Miss Peyton mildly, "are the continentals in the county?"

Harvey was about to utter something in reply, when the door opened, and Cæsar made his appearance, attended by his delighted spouse.

The race of blacks of which Cæsar was a favorable specimen is becoming very rare. The old

family servant, who, born and reared in the dwelling of his master, identified himself with the welfare of those whom it was his lot to serve, is giving place in every direction to that vagrant class which has sprung up within the last thirty years, and whose members roam through the country unfettered by principles, and uninfluenced by attachments. For it is one of the curses of slavery, that its victims become incompetent to the attributes of a freeman. The short curly hair of Cæsar had acquired from age a coloring of gray, that added greatly to the venerable cast of his appearance. Long and indefatigable applications of the comb had straightened the close curls of his forehead, until they stood erect in a stiff and formal brush, that gave at least two inches to his stature. The shining black of his youth had lost its glistening hue, and it had been succeeded by a dingy brown. His eyes, which stood at a most formidable distance from each

other, were small, and characterized by an expression of good feeling, occasionally interrupted by the petulance of an indulged servant; they, however, now danced with inward delight. His nose possessed, in an eminent manner, all the requisites for smelling, but with the most modest unobtrusiveness; the nostrils being abundantly capacious, without thrusting themselves in the way of their neighbors. His mouth was capacious to a fault, and was only tolerated on account of the double row of pearls it contained. In person Cæsar was short, and we should say square, had not all the angles and curves of his figure bid defiance to anything like mathematical symmetry. His arms were long and muscular, and terminated by two bony hands, that exhibited on one side a coloring of blackish gray, and on the other, a faded pink. But it was in his legs that nature had indulged her most capricious humor. There was an abundance of material inju-

diciously used. The calves were neither before nor behind, but rather on the outer side of the limb, inclining forward, and so close to the knee as to render the free use of that joint a subject of doubt. In the foot, considering it as a base on which the body was to rest, Cæsar had no cause of complaint, unless, indeed, it might be that the leg was placed so near the centre, as to make it sometimes a matter of dispute, whether he was not walking backwards. But whatever might be the faults a statuary could discover in his person, the heart of Cæsar Thompson was in the right place, and, we doubt not, of very just dimensions.

Accompanied by his ancient companion, Cæsar now advanced, and paid his tribute of gratitude in words. Sarah received them with great complacency, and made a few compliments to the taste of the husband, and the probable appearance of the wife. Frances, with a face beaming

with a look of pleasure that corresponded to the smiling countenances of the blacks, offered the service of her needle in fitting the admired calico to its future uses. The offer was humbly and gratefully accepted.

As Cæsar followed his wife and the pedler from the apartment, and was in the act of closing the door, he indulged himself in a grateful soliloquy, by saying aloud,—

“Good little lady—Miss Fanny—take care of the fader—love to make a gown for old Dinah, too.” What else his feelings might have induced him to utter is unknown, but the sound of his voice was heard some time after the distance rendered his words indistinct.

Harper had dropped his book, and he sat an admiring witness of the scene; and Frances enjoyed a double satisfaction, as she received an approving smile from a face which concealed, under the traces of deep thought and engrossing

care, the benevolent expression which characterizes all the best feelings of the human heart.

CHAPTER IV

“It is the form, the eye, the word,
The bearing of that stranger lord,
His stature, manly, bold, and tall,
Built like a castle's battled wall,
Yet moulded in such just degrees
His giant strength seems lightsome ease.
Weather and war their rougher trace
Have left on that majestic face;
But 'tis his dignity of eye!
There, if a suppliant, would I fly,
Secure, 'mid danger, wrongs, and grief,
Of sympathy, redress, relief—
That glance, if guilty, would I dread
More than the doom that spoke me dead.'
'Enough, enough!' the princess cried,
'Tis Scotland's hope, her joy, her pride!'"

SCOTT

THE party sat in silence for many minutes after the pedler had withdrawn. Mr. Wharton had heard enough to increase his uneasiness, without in the least removing his apprehensions on behalf of his son. The captain was impatiently wishing Harper in any other place than the one he occupied with such apparent composure, while Miss Peyton completed the disposal of her breakfast equipage, with the mild complacency of her nature, aided a little by an

inward satisfaction at possessing so large a portion of the trader's lace; Sarah was busily occupied in arranging her purchases, and Frances was kindly assisting in the occupation, disregarding her own neglected bargains, when the stranger suddenly broke the silence by saying,—

“If any apprehensions of me induce Captain Wharton to maintain his disguise, I wish him to be undeceived; had I motives for betraying him, they could not operate under present circumstances.”

The younger sister sank into her seat colorless and astonished. Miss Peyton dropped the teatray she was lifting from the table, and Sarah sat with her purchases unheeded in her lap, in speechless surprise. Mr. Wharton was stupefied; but the captain, hesitating a moment from astonishment, sprang into the middle of the room, and exclaimed, as he tore off the instruments of his disguise,—

"I believe you from my soul, and this tiresome imposition shall continue no longer. Yet I am at a loss to conceive in what manner you should know me."

"You really look so much better in your proper person, Captain Wharton," said Harper, with a slight smile, "I would advise you never to conceal it in future. There is enough to betray you, if other sources of detection were wanting"; as he spoke, he pointed to a picture suspended over the mantelpiece, which exhibited the British officer in his regimentals.

"I had flattered myself," cried young Wharton, with a laugh, "that I looked better on the canvas than in a masquerade. You must be a close observer, sir."

"Necessity has made me one," said Harper, rising from his seat.

Frances met him as he was about to withdraw, and, taking his hand between both her own,

said with earnestness, her cheeks mantling with their richest vermilion, "You cannot—you will not betray my brother."

For an instant Harper paused in silent admiration of the lovely pleader, and then, folding her hands on his breast, he replied solemnly, "I cannot, and I will not"; he released her hands, and laying his own on her head gently, continued, "If the blessing of a stranger can profit you, receive it." He turned, and bowing low, retired, with a delicacy that was duly appreciated by those he quitted, to his own apartment.

The whole party were deeply impressed with the ingenuous and solemn manner of the traveller, and all but the father found immediate relief in his declaration. Some of the cast-off clothes of the captain, which had been removed with the goods from the city, were produced; and young Wharton, released from the uneasiness of his disguise, began at last to enjoy a visit which had

been undertaken at so much personal risk to himself. Mr. Wharton retiring to his apartment, in pursuance of his regular engagements, the ladies, with the young man, were left to an uninterrupted communication on such subjects as were most agreeable. Even Miss Peyton was affected with the spirits of her young relatives; and they sat for an hour enjoying, in heedless confidence, the pleasures of an unrestrained conversation, without reflecting on any danger which might be impending over them. The city and their acquaintances were not long neglected; for Miss Peyton, who had never forgotten the many agreeable hours of her residence within its boundaries, soon inquired, among others, after their old acquaintance, Colonel Wellmere.

"Oh!" cried the captain, gayly, "he yet continues there, as handsome and as gallant as ever."

Although a woman be not actually in love, she seldom hears without a blush the name of a man

whom she might love, and who has been connected with herself by idle gossips, in the amatory rumor of the day. Such had been the case with Sarah, and she dropped her eyes on the carpet with a smile, that, aided by the blush which suffused her cheek, in no degree detracted from her native charms.

Captain Wharton, without heeding this display of interest in his sister, immediately continued, "At times he is melancholy—we tell him it must be love." Sarah raised her eyes to the face of her brother, and was consciously turning them on the rest of the party, when she met those of her sister, laughing with good humor and high spirits, as she cried, "Poor man! does he despair?"

"Why, no—one would think he could not; the eldest son of a man of wealth, so handsome, and a colonel."

"Strong reasons, indeed, why he should pre-

vail," said Sarah, endeavoring to laugh; "more particularly the latter."

"Let me tell you," replied the captain, gravely, "a lieutenant-colonelcy in the Guards is a very pretty thing."

"And Colonel Wellmere a very pretty man," added Frances.

"Nay, Frances," returned her sister, "Colonel Wellmere was never a favorite of yours; he is too loyal to his king to be agreeable to your taste."

Frances quickly answered, "And is not Henry loyal to his king?"

"Come, come," said Miss Peyton, "no difference of opinion about the colonel—he is a favorite of mine."

"Fanny likes majors better," cried the brother, pulling her upon his knee.

"Nonsense!" said the blushing girl, as she endeavored to extricate herself from the grasp of her laughing brother.

"It surprises me," continued the captain, "that Peyton, when he procured the release of my father, did not endeavor to detain my sister in the rebel camp."

"That might have endangered his own liberty," said the smiling girl, resuming her seat; "you know it is liberty for which Major Dunwoodie is fighting."

"Liberty!" exclaimed Sarah; "very pretty liberty which exchanges one master for fifty."

"The privilege of changing masters at all is a liberty."

"And one you ladies would sometimes be glad to exercise," cried the captain.

"We like, I believe, to have the liberty of choosing who they shall be in the first place," said the laughing girl; "don't we, Aunt Jeanette?"

"Me!" cried Miss Peyton, starting; "what do I know of such things, child? you must ask some

one else, if you wish to learn such matters."

"Ah! you would have us think you were never young! but what am I to believe of all the tales I have heard about the handsome Miss Jeanette Peyton?"

"Nonsense, my dear, nonsense," said the aunt, endeavoring to suppress a smile; "it is very silly to believe all you hear."

"Nonsense, do you call it?" cried the captain, gayly; "to this hour General Montrose toasts Miss Peyton; I heard him within the week, at Sir Henry's table."

"Why, Henry, you are as saucy as your sister; and to break in upon your folly, I must take you to see my new home-made manufactures, which I will be bold enough to put in contrast with the finery of Birch."

The young people rose to follow their aunt, in a perfect good humor with each other and the world. On ascending the stairs to the place of

deposit for Miss Peyton's articles of domestic economy, she availed herself, however, of an opportunity to inquire of her nephew, whether General Montrose suffered as much from the gout as he had done when she knew him.

It is a painful discovery we make, as we advance in life, that even those we most love are not exempt from its frailties. When the heart is fresh, and the view of the future unsullied by the blemishes which have been gathered from the experience of the past, our feelings are most holy; we love to identify with the persons of our natural friends all those qualities to which we ourselves aspire, and all those virtues we have been taught to revere. The confidence with which we esteem seems a part of our nature; and there is a purity thrown around the affections which tie us to our kindred, that after-life can seldom hope to see uninjured. The family of Mr. Wharton continued to enjoy, for the remainder

of the day, a happiness to which they had long been strangers; and one that sprung, in its younger members, from the delights of the most confident affection, and the exchange of the most disinterested endearments.

Harper appeared only at the dinner-table, and he retired with the cloth, under the pretence of some engagements in his own room. Notwithstanding the confidence created by his manner, the family felt his absence a relief; for the visit of Captain Wharton was necessarily to be confined to a very few days, both from the limitation of his leave of absence, and the danger of a discovery.

All dread of consequences, however, was lost in the pleasure of the meeting. Once or twice during the day, Mr. Wharton had suggested a doubt as to the character of his unknown guest, and the possibility of the detection of his son

proceeding in some manner from his information: but the idea was earnestly opposed by all his children; even Sarah uniting with her brother and sister in pleading warmly in favor of the sincerity expressed in the outward appearance of the traveller.

“Such appearances, my children,” replied the desponding parent, “are but too often deceitful; when men like Major André lend themselves to the purposes of fraud, it is idle to reason from qualities, much less externals.”

“Fraud!” cried his son quickly; “surely, sir, you forget that Major André was serving his king, and that the usages of war justified the measure.”

“And did not the usages of war justify his death, Henry?” inquired Frances, speaking in a low voice, unwilling to abandon what she thought the cause of her country, and yet unable to suppress her feelings for the man.

"Never!" exclaimed the young man, springing from his seat, and pacing the floor rapidly; "Frances, you shock me; suppose it should be my fate, even now, to fall into the power of the rebels; you would vindicate my execution—perhaps exult in the cruelty of Washington."

"Henry!" said Frances, solemnly, quivering with emotion, and with a face pale as death, "you little know my heart."

"Pardon me, my sister—my little Fanny," cried the repentant youth, pressing her to his bosom, and kissing off the tears which had burst, spite of her resolution, from her eyes.

"It is very foolish to regard your hasty words, I know," said Frances, extricating herself from his arms, and raising her yet humid eyes to his face with a smile; "but reproach from those we love is most severe, Henry; particularly—where we—we think—we know"—her paleness gradually gave place to the color of the rose, as she

concluded in a low voice, with her eyes directed to the carpet, "we are undeserving of it."

Miss Peyton moved from her own seat to the one next her niece, and kindly taking her hand, observed, "You should not suffer the impetuosity of your brother to affect you so much; boys, you know, are proverbially ungovernable."

"And, from my conduct, you might add cruel," said the captain, seating himself on the other side of his sister; "but on the subject of the death of André we are all of us uncommonly sensitive. You did not know him; he was all that was brave—that was accomplished—that was estimable." Frances smiled faintly, shook her head, but made no reply. Her brother, observing the marks of incredulity in her countenance, continued, "You doubt it, and justify his death?"

"I do not doubt his worth," replied the maid, mildly, "nor his being deserving of a more happy fate; but I cannot doubt the propriety of

Washington's conduct. I know but little of the customs of war, and wish to know less; but with what hopes of success could the Americans contend, if they yielded all the principles which long usage had established, to the exclusive purposes of the British?"

"Why contend at all?" cried Sarah, impatiently; "besides, being rebels, all their acts are illegal."

"Women are but mirrors, which reflect the images before them," cried the captain, good-naturedly. "In Frances I see the picture of Major Dunwoodie, and in Sarah—"

"Colonel Wellmere," interrupted the younger sister, laughing, and blushing crimson. "I must confess I am indebted to the major for my reasoning—am I not, Aunt Jeanette?"

"I believe it is something like his logic, indeed, child."

"I plead guilty; and you, Sarah, have not for-

gotten the learned discussions of Colonel Wellmere."

"I trust I never forget the right," said Sarah, emulating her sister in color, and rising, under the pretence of avoiding the heat of the fire.

Nothing occurred of any moment during the rest of the day; but in the evening Cæsar reported that he had overheard voices in the room of Harper, conversing in a low tone. The apartment occupied by the traveller was the wing at the extremity of the building, opposite to the parlor in which the family ordinarily assembled; and it seems that Cæsar had established a regular system of espionage, with a view to the safety of his young master. This intelligence gave some uneasiness to all the members of the family; but the entrance of Harper himself, with the air of benevolence and sincerity which shone through his reserve, soon removed the doubts from the breast of all but Mr. Wharton. His chil-

dren and sister believed Cæsar to have been mistaken, and the evening passed off without any additional alarm.

On the afternoon of the succeeding day, the party were assembled in the parlor around the tea-table of Miss Peyton, when a change in the weather occurred. The thin *scud*, that apparently floated but a short distance above the tops of the hills, began to drive from the west towards the east in astonishing rapidity. The rain yet continued to beat against the eastern windows of the house with fury; in that direction the heavens were dark and gloomy. Frances was gazing at the scene with the desire of youth to escape from the tedium of confinement, when, as if by magic, all was still. The rushing winds had ceased, the pelting of the storm was over, and, springing to the window, with delight pictured in her face, she saw a glorious ray of sunshine lighting the opposite wood. The foliage

glittered with the checkered beauties of the October leaf, reflecting back from the moistened boughs the richest lustre of an American autumn. In an instant, the piazza, which opened to the south, was thronged with the inmates of the cottage. The air was mild, balmy, and refreshing; in the east, clouds, which might be likened to the retreating masses of a discomfited army, hung around the horizon in awful and increasing darkness. At a little elevation above the cottage, the thin vapor was still rushing towards the east with amazing velocity; while in the west the sun had broken forth and shed his parting radiance on the scene below, aided by the fullest richness of a clear atmosphere and a freshened herbage. Such moments belong only to the climate of America, and are enjoyed in a degree proportioned to the suddenness of the contrast, and the pleasure we experience in escaping from the turbulence of the elements to the quiet of a

peaceful evening, and an air still as the softest mornings in June.

“What a magnificent scene!” said Harper, in a low tone; “how grand! how awfully sublime!—may such a quiet speedily await the struggle in which my country is engaged, and such a glorious evening follow the day of her adversity!”

Frances, who stood next to him, alone heard the voice. Turning in amazement from the view to the speaker, she saw him standing bare-headed, erect, and with his eyes lifted to heaven. There was no longer the quiet which had seemed their characteristic, but they were lighted into something like enthusiasm, and a slight flush passed over his features.

There can be no danger apprehended from such a man, thought Frances; such feelings belong only to the virtuous.

The musings of the party were now inter-

rupted by the sudden appearance of the pedler. He had taken advantage of the first gleam of sunshine to hasten to the cottage. Heedless of wet or dry as it lay in his path, with arms swinging to and fro, and with his head bent forward of his body several inches, Harvey Birch approached the piazza, with a gait peculiarly his own. It was the quick, lengthened pace of an itinerant vender of goods.

"Fine evening," said the pedler, saluting the party, without raising his eyes; "quite warm and agreeable for the season."

Mr. Wharton assented to the remark, and inquired kindly after the health of his father. Harvey heard him, and continued standing for some time in moody silence; but the question being repeated, he answered with a slight tremor in his voice,—

"He fails fast; old age and hardships will do their work." The pedler turned his face from the

view of most of the family; but Frances noticed his glistening eyes and quivering lip, and, for the second time, Harvey rose in her estimation.

The valley in which the residence of Mr. Wharton stood ran in a direction from northwest to southeast, and the house was placed on the side of a hill which terminated its length in the former direction. A small opening, occasioned by the receding of the opposite hill, and the fall of the land to the level of the tide water, afforded a view of the Sound * over the tops of the distant woods on its margin. The surface of the water which had so lately been lashing the shores with boisterous fury, was already losing its ruffled darkness in the long and regular undulations that succeeded a tempest, while the

* An island more than forty leagues in length lies opposite the coasts of New York and Connecticut. The arm of the sea which separates it from the main is technically called a sound, and in that part of the country *par excellence*, *The Sound*. This sheet of water varies in its breadth from five to thirty miles.

light air from the southwest was gently touching their summits, lending its feeble aid in stilling the waters. Some dark spots were now to be distinguished, occasionally rising into view, and again sinking behind the lengthened waves which interposed themselves to the sight. They were unnoticed by all but the pedler. He had seated himself on the piazza, at a distance from Harper, and appeared to have forgotten the object of his visit. His roving eye, however, soon caught a glimpse of these new objects in the view, and he sprang up with alacrity, gazing intently towards the water. He changed his place, glanced his eye with marked uneasiness on Harper, and then said with great emphasis—

“The rig’lars must be out from below.”

“Why do you think so?” inquired Captain Wharton, eagerly. “God send it may be true; I want their escort in again.”

“Them ten whaleboats would not move so

fast unless they are better manned than common."

"Perhaps," cried Mr. Wharton in alarm, "they are—they are continentals returning from the island."

"They look like rig'lars," said the pedler, with meaning.

"Look!" repeated the captain, "there is nothing but spots to be seen."

Harvey disregarded his observation, but seemed to be soliloquizing, as he said in an undertone, "They came out before the gale—have laid on the island these two days—horse are on the road—there will soon be fighting near us." During this speech, Birch several times glanced his eye towards Harper, with evident uneasiness, but no corresponding emotion betrayed any interest of that gentleman in the scene. He stood in silent contemplation of the view, and seemed enjoying the change in the air.

As Birch concluded, however, Harper turned to his host, and mentioned that his business would not admit of unnecessary delay; he would, therefore, avail himself of the fine evening to ride a few miles on his journey. Mr. Wharton made many professions of regret at losing so agreeable an inmate; but was too mindful of his duty not to speed the parting guest, and orders were instantly given to that effect.

The uneasiness of the pedler increased in a manner for which nothing apparent could account; his eye was constantly wandering towards the lower end of the vale, as if in expectation of some interruption from that quarter. At length Cæsar appeared, leading the noble beast which was to bear the weight of the traveller. The pedler officiously assisted to tighten the girths, and fasten the blue cloak and valise to the mail-straps.

Every preparation being completed, Harper

proceeded to take his leave. To Sarah and her aunt he paid his compliments with ease and kindness; but when he came to Frances, he paused a moment, while his face assumed an expression of more than ordinary benignity. His eye repeated the blessing which had before fallen from his lips, and the girl felt her cheek glow, and her heart beat, with a quicker pulsation, as he spoke his adieus. There was a mutual exchange of polite courtesy between the host and his parting guest; but as Harper frankly offered his hand to Captain Wharton, he remarked, in a manner of great solemnity,—

“The step you have undertaken is one of much danger, and disagreeable consequences to yourself may result from it; in such a case, I may have it in my power to prove the gratitude I owe your family for its kindness.”

“Surely, sir,” cried the father, losing sight of delicacy in apprehension for his child, “you will

keep secret the discovery which your being in my house has enabled you to make?"

Harper turned quickly to the speaker, and then, losing the sternness which had begun to gather on his countenance, he answered mildly, "I have learnt nothing in your family, sir, of which I was ignorant before; but your son is safer from my knowledge of his visit than he would be without it."

He bowed to the whole party, and without taking any notice of the pedler, other than by simply thanking him for his attentions, mounted his horse, and, riding steadily and gracefully through the little gate, was soon lost behind the hill which sheltered the valley to the northward.

The eyes of the pedler followed the retiring figure of the horseman so long as it continued within view, and as it disappeared from his sight, he drew a long and heavy sigh, as if re-

lieved from a load of apprehension. The Whartons had meditated in silence on the character and visit of their unknown guest for the same period, when the father approached Birch, and observed,—

“I am yet your debtor, Harvey, for the tobacco you were so kind as to bring me from the city.”

“If it should not prove so good as the first,” replied the pedler, fixing a last and lingering look in the direction of Harper’s route, “it is owing to the scarcity of the article.”

“I like it much,” continued the other; “but you have forgotten to name the price.”

The countenance of the trader changed, and, losing its expression of deep care in a natural acuteness, he answered,—

“It is hard to say what ought to be the price: I believe I must leave it to your own generosity.”

Mr. Wharton had taken a hand well filled with the images of Carolus III. from his pocket,

and now extended it towards Birch with three of the pieces between his finger and thumb. Harvey's eyes twinkled as he contemplated the reward; and rolling over in his mouth a large quantity of the article in question, coolly stretched forth his hand, into which the dollars fell with a most agreeable sound: but not satisfied with the transient music of their fall, the pedler gave each piece in succession a ring on the stepping-stone of the piazza, before he consigned it to the safe keeping of a huge deerskin purse, which vanished from the sight of the spectators so dexterously, that not one of them could have told about what part of his person it was secreted.

This very material point in his business so satisfactorily completed, the pedler rose from his seat on the floor of the piazza, and approached to where Captain Wharton stood, supporting his sisters on either arm, as they listened with the lively interest of affection to his conversation.

The agitation of the preceding incidents had caused such an expenditure of the juices which had become necessary to the mouth of the pedler, that a new supply of the weed was required before he could turn his attention to his business of lesser moment. This done, he asked abruptly,—

“Captain Wharton, do you go in to-night?”

“No!” said the captain, laconically, and looking at his lovely burdens with great affection. “Mr. Birch, would you have me leave such company so soon, when I may never enjoy it again?”

“Brother!” said Frances, “jesting on such a subject is cruel.”

“I rather guess,” continued the pedler, coolly, “now the storm is over, the Skinners may be moving; you had better shorten your visit, Captain Wharton.”

“Oh!” cried the British officer, “a few guineas will buy off those rascals at any time, should I

meet them. No, no, Mr. Birch, here I stay until morning."

"Money could not liberate Major André," said the pedler, dryly.

Both the sisters now turned to the captain in alarm, and the elder observed,—

"You had better take the advice of Harvey; rest assured, brother, his opinion in such matters ought not to be disregarded."

"Yes," added the younger, "if, as I suspect, Mr. Birch assisted you to come here, your safety, our happiness, dear Henry, requires you to listen to him now."

"I brought myself out, and can take myself in," said the captain positively; "our bargain went no further than to procure my disguise, and to let me know when the coast was clear; and in the latter particular, you were mistaken, Mr. Birch."

"I was," said the pedler, with some interest,

"and the greater is the reason why you should get back to-night; the pass I gave you will serve but once."

"Cannot you forge another?"

The pale cheek of the trader showed an unusual color, but he continued silent, with his eyes fixed on the ground, until the young man added, with great positiveness, "Here I stay this night, come what will."

"Captain Wharton," said the pedler, with great deliberation and marked emphasis, "beware a tall Virginian, with huge whiskers; he is below you, to my knowledge; the devil can't deceive him; I never could but once."

"Let him beware of me," said Wharton, haughtily; "but, Mr. Birch, I exonerate you from further responsibility."

"Will you give me that in writing?" asked the cautious Birch.

"Oh! cheerfully," cried the captain, with a

laugh; "Cæsar! pen, ink, and paper, while I write a discharge for my trusty attendant, Harvey Birch, pedler, etc., etc."

The implements for writing were produced, and the captain, with great gayety, wrote the desired acknowledgment in language of his own; which the pedler took, and carefully depositing it by the side of the images of his Catholic Majesty, made a sweeping bow to the whole family, and departed as he had approached. He was soon seen at a distance, stealing into the door of his own humble dwelling.

The father and sisters of the captain were too much rejoiced in retaining the young man to express, or even entertain, the apprehensions his situation might reasonably excite; but on retiring to their evening repast, a cooler reflection induced the captain to think of changing his mind. Unwilling to trust himself out of the protection of his father's domains, the young man des-

patched Cæsar to desire another interview with Harvey. The black soon returned with the unwelcome intelligence that it was now too late. Katy had told him that Harvey must be miles on his road to the northward, "having left home at early candle-light with his pack." Nothing now remained to the captain but patience, until the morning should afford further opportunity of deciding on the best course for him to pursue.

"This Harvey Birch, with his knowing looks and portentous warnings, gives me more uneasiness than I am willing to own," said Captain Wharton, rousing himself from a fit of musing, in which the danger of his situation made no small part of his meditations.

"How is it that he is able to travel to and fro in these difficult times, without molestation?" inquired Miss Peyton.

"Why the rebels suffer him to escape so easily, is more than I can answer," returned the other;

"but Sir Henry would not permit a hair of his head to be injured."

"Indeed!" cried Frances, with interest; "is he then known to Sir Henry Clinton?"

"At least he ought to be."

"Do you think, my son," asked Mr. Wharton, "there is no danger of his betraying you?"

"Why—no; I reflected on that before I trusted myself to his power," said the captain, thoughtfully; "he seems to be faithful in matters of business. The danger to himself, should he return to the city, would prevent such an act of villainy."

"I think," said Frances, adopting the manner of her brother, "Harvey Birch is not without good feelings; at least, he has the appearance of them at times."

"Oh!" cried his sister, exulting, "he has loyalty, and that with me is a cardinal virtue."

"I am afraid," said her brother, laughing,

“love of money is a stronger passion than love of his king.”

“Then,” said the father, “you cannot be safe while in his power—for no love will withstand the temptation of money, when offered to avarice.”

“Surely, sir,” cried the youth, recovering his gayety, “there must be one love that can resist anything—is there not, Fanny?”

“Here is your candle; you keep your father up beyond his usual hour.”

CHAPTER V

"Through Solway sands, through Taross moss,
Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross :
By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds.
In Eske, or Liddel, fords were none,
But he would ride them, one by one;
Alike to him was time or tide,
December's snow or July's pride;
Alike to him was tide or time,
Moonless midnight or matin prime."

SCOTT

ALL the members of the Wharton family laid their heads on their pillows that night, with a foreboding of some interruption to their ordinary quiet. Uneasiness kept the sisters from enjoying their usual repose, and they rose from their beds, on the following morning, unrefreshed, and almost without having closed their eyes.

On taking an eager and hasty survey of the valley from the windows of their room, nothing, however, but its usual serenity was to be seen. It was glittering with the opening brilliancy of one

of those lovely, mild days, which occur about the time of the falling of the leaf; and which, by their frequency, class the American autumn with the most delightful seasons of other countries. We have no spring; vegetation seems to leap into existence, instead of creeping, as in the same latitudes of the Old World; but how gracefully it retires! September, October, even November and December, compose the season for enjoyment in the open air; they have their storms, but they are distinct, and not of long continuance, leaving a clear atmosphere and a cloudless sky.

As nothing could be seen likely to interrupt the enjoyments and harmony of such a day, the sisters descended to the parlor, with a returning confidence in their brother's security, and their own happiness.

The family was early in assembling around the breakfast-table; and Miss Peyton, with a little of that minute precision which creeps into

the habits of single life, had pleasantly insisted that the absence of her nephew should in no manner interfere with the regular hours she had established; consequently, the party were already seated when the captain made his appearance; though the untasted coffee sufficiently proved that by none of his relatives was his absence disregarded.

"I think I did much better," he cried, taking a chair between his sisters, and receiving their offered salutes, "to secure a good bed and such a plentiful breakfast, instead of trusting to the hospitality of that renowned corps, the Cow-Boys."

"If you could sleep," said Sarah, "you were more fortunate than Frances and myself; every murmur of the night air sounded to me like the approach of the rebel army."

"Why," said the captain, laughing, "I do acknowledge a little inquietude myself—but how

was it with you?" turning to his younger and evidently favorite sister, and tapping her cheek; "did you see banners in the clouds, and mistake Miss Peyton's Æolian harp for rebellious music?"

"Nay, Henry," rejoined the maid, looking at him affectionately, "much as I love my own country, the approach of her troops just now would give me great pain."

The brother made no reply; but returning the fondness expressed in her eye by a look of fraternal tenderness, he gently pressed her hand in silence; when Cæsar, who had participated largely in the anxiety of the family, and who had risen with the dawn, and kept a vigilant watch on the surrounding objects, as he stood gazing from one of the windows, exclaimed with a face that approached to something like the hues of a white man,—

"Run—Massa Harry—run—if he love old Cæsar, run—here come a rebel horse."

“Run!” repeated the British officer, gathering himself up in military pride; “no, Mr. Cæsar, running is not my trade.” While speaking, he walked deliberately to the window, where the family were already collected in the greatest consternation.

At the distance of more than a mile, about fifty dragoons were to be seen, winding down one of the lateral entrances of the valley. In advance, with an officer, was a man attired in the dress of a countryman, who pointed in the direction of the cottage. A small party now left the main body, and moved rapidly towards the object of their destination.

On reaching the road which led through the bottom of the valley, they turned their horses’ heads to the north.

The Whartons continued chained in breathless silence to the spot, watching their movements, when the party, having reached the

dwelling of Birch, made a rapid circle around his grounds, and in an instant his house was surrounded by a dozen sentinels.

Two or three of the dragoons now dismounted and disappeared: in a few minutes, however, they returned to the yard, followed by Katy, from whose violent gesticulations, it was evident that matters of no trifling concern were on the carpet. A short communication with the loquacious housekeeper followed the arrival of the main body of the troop, and the advanced party remounting, the whole moved towards the Locusts with great speed.

As yet none of the family had sufficient presence of mind to devise any means of security for Captain Wharton; but the danger now became too pressing to admit of longer delay, and various means of secreting him were hastily proposed; but they were all haughtily rejected by the young man, as unworthy of his character. It

was too late to retreat to the woods in the rear of the cottage, for he would unavoidably be seen, and, followed by a troop of horse, as inevitably taken.

At length, his sisters, with trembling hands, replaced his original disguise, the instruments of which had been carefully kept at hand by Cæsar, in expectation of some sudden emergency.

This arrangement was hastily and imperfectly completed, as the dragoons entered the lawn and orchard of the Locusts, riding with the rapidity of the wind; and in their turn the Whartons were surrounded.

Nothing remained now, but to meet the impending examination with as much indifference as the family could assume. The leader of the horse dismounted, and, followed by a couple of his men, he approached the outer door of the building, which was slowly and reluctantly opened for his admission by Cæsar. The heavy

tread of the trooper, as he followed the black to the door of the parlor, rang in the ears of the females as it approached nearer and nearer, and drove the blood from their faces to their hearts, with a chill that nearly annihilated feeling.

A man, whose colossal stature manifested the possession of vast strength, entered the room, and removing his cap, he saluted the family with a mildness his appearance did not indicate as belonging to his nature. His dark hair hung around his brow in profusion, though stained with the powder which was worn at that day, and his face was nearly hid in the whiskers by which it was disfigured. Still, the expression of his eye, though piercing, was not bad, and his voice, though deep and powerful, was far from unpleasant. Frances ventured to throw a timid glance at his figure as he entered, and saw at once the man from whose scrutiny Harvey Birch had warned them there was so much to be apprehended.

"You have no cause for alarm, ladies," said the officer, pausing a moment, and contemplating the pale faces around him; "my business will be confined to a few questions, which, if freely answered, will instantly remove us from your dwelling."

"And what may they be, sir?" stammered Mr. Wharton, rising from his chair, and waiting anxiously for the reply.

"Has there been a strange gentleman staying with you during the storm?" continued the dragoon, speaking with interest, and in some degree sharing in the evident anxiety of the father.

"This gentleman—here—favored us with his company during the rain, and has not yet departed."

"This gentleman!" repeated the other, turning to Captain Wharton, and contemplating his figure for a moment, until the anxiety of his countenance gave place to a lurking smile. He

approached the youth with an air of comic gravity, and with a low bow, continued, "I am sorry for the severe cold you have in your head, sir."

"I!" exclaimed the captain, in surprise; "I have no cold in my head."

"I fancied it then, from seeing you had covered such handsome black locks with that ugly old wig; it was my mistake; you will please to pardon it."

Mr. Wharton groaned aloud; but the ladies, ignorant of the extent of their visitor's knowledge, remained in trembling yet rigid silence. The captain himself moved his hand involuntarily to his head, and discovered that the trepidation of his sisters had left some of his natural hair exposed. The dragoon watched the movement with a continued smile, when, seeming to recollect himself, turning to the father, he proceeded,—

"Then, sir, I am to understand there has not been a Mr. Harper here, within the week?"

“Mr. Harper,” echoed the other, feeling a load removed from his heart, “yes,—I had forgotten; but he is gone; and if there be anything wrong in his character, we are in entire ignorance of it; to me he was a total stranger.”

“You have but little to apprehend from his character,” answered the dragoon, dryly; “but he is gone—how—when—and whither?”

“He departed as he arrived,” said Mr. Wharton, gathering renewed confidence from the manner of the trooper; “on horseback, last evening, and he took the northern road.”

The officer listened to him with intense interest, his countenance gradually lighting into a smile of pleasure; and the instant Mr. Wharton concluded his laconic reply, he turned on his heel and left the apartment. The Whartons, judging from his manner, thought he was about to proceed in quest of the object of his inquiries. They observed the dragoon, on gaining the lawn,

in earnest, and apparently pleased conversation with his two subalterns. In a few moments orders were given to some of the troop, and horsemen left the valley, at full speed, by its various roads.

The suspense of the party within, who were all highly interested witnesses of this scene, was shortly terminated; for the heavy tread of the dragoon soon announced his second approach. He bowed again politely as he re-entered the room, and walking up to Captain Wharton, said, with comic gravity,—

“Now, sir, my principal business being done, may I beg to examine the quality of that wig?”

The British officer imitated the manner of the other, as he deliberately uncovered his head, and handing him the wig, observed, “I hope, sir, it is to your liking.”

“I cannot, without violating the truth, say it is,” returned the dragoon; “I prefer your ebony

hair, from which you seem to have combed the powder with great industry. But that must have been a sad hurt you have received under this enormous black patch."

"You appear so close an observer of things, I should like your opinion of it, sir," said Henry, removing the silk, and exhibiting the cheek free from blemish.

"Upon my word, you improve most rapidly in externals," added the trooper, preserving his muscles in inflexible gravity; "if I could but persuade you to exchange this old surtout for that handsome blue coat by your side, I think I never could witness a more agreeable metamorphosis, since I was changed myself from a lieutenant to a captain."

Young Wharton very composedly did as was required; and stood an extremely handsome, well-dressed young man. The dragoon looked at him for a minute with the drollery that char-

acterized his manner, and then continued,—

“This is a new-comer in the scene; it is usual, you know, for strangers to be introduced; I am Captain Lawton, of the Virginia horse.”

“And I, sir, am Captain Wharton, of his majesty’s 60th regiment of foot,” returned Henry, bowing stiffly, and recovering his natural manner.

The countenance of Lawton changed instantly, and his assumed quaintness vanished. He viewed the figure of Captain Wharton, as he stood proudly swelling with a pride that disdained further concealment, and exclaimed, with great earnestness,—

“Captain Wharton, from my soul I pity you!”

“Oh! then,” cried the father, in agony, “if you pity him, dear sir, why molest him? he is not a spy; nothing but a desire to see his friends prompted him to venture so far from the regular army in disguise. Leave him with us; there is no

reward, no sum, which I will not cheerfully pay."

"Sir, your anxiety for your friend excuses your language," said Lawton, haughtily; "but you forget I am a Virginian, and a gentleman." Turning to the young man, he continued, "Were you ignorant, Captain Wharton, that our pickets have been below you for several days?"

"I did not know it until I reached them, and it was then too late to retreat," said Wharton, sullenly. "I came out, as my father has mentioned, to see my friends, understanding your parties to be at Peekskill, and near the Highlands, or surely I would not have ventured."

"All this may be very true; but the affair of André has made us on the alert. When treason reaches the grade of general officers, Captain Wharton, it behooves the friends of liberty to be vigilant."

Henry bowed to this remark in distant si-

lence, but Sarah ventured to urge something in behalf of her brother. The dragoon heard her politely, and apparently with commiseration; but willing to avoid useless and embarrassing petitions, he answered mildly,—

“I am not the commander of the party, madam; Major Dunwoodie will decide what must be done with your brother; at all events, he will receive nothing but kind and gentle treatment.”

“Dunwoodie!” exclaimed Frances, with a face in which the roses contended for the mastery with the paleness of apprehension; “thank God! then Henry is safe!”

Lawton regarded her with a mingled expression of pity and admiration; then shaking his head doubtingly, he continued,—

“I hope so; and with your permission, we will leave the matter for his decision.”

The color of Frances changed from the pale-

ness of fear to the glow of hope. Her dread on behalf of her brother was certainly greatly diminished; yet her form shook, her breathing became short and irregular, and her whole frame gave tokens of extraordinary agitation. Her eyes rose from the floor to the dragoon, and were again fixed immovably on the carpet—she evidently wished to utter something but was unequal to the effort. Miss Peyton was a close observer of these movements of her niece, and advancing with an air of feminine dignity, inquired,—

“Then, sir, we may expect the pleasure of Major Dunwoodie’s company shortly?”

“Immediately, madam,” answered the dragoon, withdrawing his admiring gaze from the person of Frances; “expresses are already on the road to announce to him our situation, and the intelligence will speedily bring him to this valley; unless, indeed, some private reasons may exist to make a visit particularly unpleasant.”

"We shall always be happy to see Major Dunwoodie."

"Oh! doubtless; he is a general favorite. May I presume on it so far as to ask leave to dismount and refresh my men, who compose a part of his squadron?"

There was a manner about the trooper, that would have made the omission of such a request easily forgiven by Mr. Wharton, but he was fairly entrapped by his own eagerness to conciliate, and it was useless to withhold a consent which he thought would probably be extorted; he therefore made the most of necessity, and gave such orders as would facilitate the wishes of Captain Lawton.

The officers were invited to take their morning's repast at the family breakfast-table, and having made their arrangements without, the invitation was frankly accepted. None of the watchfulness, which was so necessary to their

situation, was neglected by the wary partisan. Patrols were seen on the distant hills, taking their protecting circuit around their comrades, who were enjoying, in the midst of dangers, a security that can only spring from the watchfulness of discipline, and the indifference of habit.

The addition to the party at Mr. Wharton's table was only three, and they were all of them men who, under the rough exterior induced by actual and arduous service, concealed the manners of gentlemen. Consequently, the interruption to the domestic privacy of the family was marked by the observance of strict decorum. The ladies left the table to their guests, who proceeded, without much superfluous diffidence, to do proper honors to the hospitality of Mr. Wharton.

At length Captain Lawton suspended for a moment his violent attacks on the buckwheat cakes, to inquire of the master of the house, if

there was not a pedler of the name of Birch who lived in the valley at times.

"At times only, I believe, sir," replied Mr. Wharton, cautiously; "he is seldom here; I may say I never see him."

"That is strange, too," said the trooper, looking at the disconcerted host intently, "considering he is your next neighbor; he must be quite domestic, sir; and to the ladies it must be somewhat inconvenient. I doubt not that that muslin in the window-seat cost twice as much as he would have asked them for it."

Mr. Wharton turned in consternation, and saw some of the recent purchases scattered about the room.

The two subalterns struggled to conceal their smiles; but the captain resumed his breakfast with an eagerness that created a doubt, whether he ever expected to enjoy another. The necessity of a supply from the dominion of Dinah soon,

however, afforded another respite, of which Lawton availed himself.

"I had a wish to break this Mr. Birch of his unsocial habits, and gave him a call this morning," he said: "had I found him within, I should have placed him where he would enjoy life in the midst of society, for a short time at least."

"And where might that be, sir?" asked Mr. Wharton, conceiving it necessary to say something.

"The guard-room," said the trooper, dryly.

"What is the offence of poor Birch?" asked Miss Peyton, handing the dragoon a fourth dish of coffee.

"Poor!" cried the captain; "if he is poor, King George is a bad paymaster."

"Yes, indeed," said one of the subalterns, "his majesty owes him a dukedom."

"And Congress a halter," continued the com-

manding officer, commencing anew on a fresh supply of the cakes.

"I am sorry," said Mr. Wharton, "that any neighbor of mine should incur the displeasure of our rulers."

"If I catch him," cried the dragoon, while buttering another cake, "he will dangle from the limbs of one of his namesakes."

"He would make no bad ornament, suspended from one of those locusts before his own door," added the lieutenant.

"Never mind," continued the captain; "I will have him yet before I'm a major."

As the language of the officers appeared to be sincere, and such as disappointed men in their rough occupations are but too apt to use, the Whartons thought it prudent to discontinue the subject. It was no new intelligence to any of the family, that Harvey Birch was distrusted and greatly harassed by the American army. His es-

capas from their hands, no less than his imprisonments, had been the conversation of the country in too many instances, and under circumstances of too great mystery, to be easily forgotten. In fact, no small part of the bitterness expressed by Captain Lawton against the pedler, arose from the unaccountable disappearance of the latter, when intrusted to the custody of two of his most faithful dragoons.

A twelvemonth had not yet elapsed, since Birch had been seen lingering near the headquarters of the commander-in-chief, and at a time when important movements were expected hourly to occur. So soon as the information of this fact was communicated to the officer whose duty it was to guard the avenues of the American camp, he despatched Captain Lawton in pursuit of the pedler.

Acquainted with all the passes of the hills, and indefatigable in the discharge of his duty,

the trooper had, with much trouble and toil, succeeded in effecting his object. The party had halted at a farm-house for the purposes of refreshment, and the prisoner was placed in a room by himself, but under the keeping of the two men before mentioned; all that was known subsequently is, that a woman was seen busily engaged in the employments of the household near the sentinels, and was particularly attentive to the wants of the captain, until he was deeply engaged in the employments of the supper-table.

Afterwards, neither woman nor pedler was to be found. The pack, indeed, was discovered open, and nearly empty, and a small door, communicating with a room adjoining to the one in which the pedler had been secured, was ajar.

Captain Lawton never could forgive the deception: his antipathies to his enemies were not very moderate, but this was adding an insult to his penetration that rankled deeply. He sat in

portentous silence, brooding over the exploit of his prisoner, yet mechanically pursuing the business before him, until, after sufficient time had passed to make a very comfortable meal, a trumpet suddenly broke on the ears of the party, sending its martial tones up the valley, in startling melody. The trooper rose instantly from the table, exclaiming,—

“Quick, gentlemen, to your horses; there comes Dunwoodie”; and, followed by his officers, he precipitately left the room.

With the exception of the sentinels left to guard Captain Wharton, the dragoons mounted, and marched out to meet their comrades.

None of the watchfulness necessary in a war, in which similarity of language, appearance, and customs, rendered prudence doubly necessary, was omitted by the cautious leader. On getting sufficiently near, however, to a body of horse of more than double his own number, to distin-

guish countenances, Lawton plunged his rowels into his charger, and in a moment he was by the side of his commander.

The ground in front of the cottage was again occupied by the horse; and observing the same precautions as before, the newly arrived troops hastened to participate in the cheer prepared for their comrades.

CHAPTER VI

"And let conquerors boast
Their fields of fame—he who in virtue arms
A young warm spirit against beauty's charms,
Who feels her brightness, yet defies her thrall,
Is the best, bravest conqueror of them all."

MOORE

THE ladies of the Wharton family had collected about a window, deeply interested in the scene we have related.

Sarah viewed the approach of her countrymen with a smile of contemptuous indifference; for she even under-valued the personal appearance of men whom she thought arrayed in the unholy cause of rebellion. Miss Peyton looked on the gallant show with an exulting pride, which arose in the reflection that the warriors before her were the chosen troops of her native colony; while Frances gazed with a singleness of interest that had absorbed all other considerations.

The two parties had not yet joined, before her





quick eye distinguished one horseman in particular from those around him. To her it appeared that even the steed of this youthful soldier seemed to be conscious that he sustained the weight of no common man: his hoofs but lightly touched the earth, and his airy tread was the curbed motion of a blooded charger.

The dragoon sat in the saddle, with a firmness and ease that showed him master of himself and horse,—his figure uniting the just proportions of strength and activity, being tall, round and muscular. To this officer Lawton made his report, and, side by side, they rode into the field opposite to the cottage.

The heart of Frances beat with a pulsation nearly stifling, as he paused for a moment, and took a survey of the building, with an eye whose dark and sparkling glance could be seen, notwithstanding the distance. Her color changed, and for an instant, as she saw the youth throw

himself from the saddle, she was compelled to seek relief for her trembling limbs in a chair.

The officer gave a few hasty orders to his second in command, walked rapidly into the lawn, and approached the cottage. Frances rose from her seat, and vanished from the apartment. The dragoon ascended the steps of the piazza, and had barely time to touch the outer door, when it opened to his admission.

The youth of Frances, when she left the city, had prevented her sacrificing, in conformity to the customs of that day, all her native beauties on the altar of fashion. Her hair, which was of a golden richness of color, was left, untortured, to fall in the natural ringlets of infancy, and it shaded a face which was glowing with the united charms of health, youth, and artlessness; her eyes spoke volumes, but her tongue was silent; her hands were interlocked before her, and, aided by her taper form, bending forward in an

attitude of expectation, gave a loveliness and an interest to her appearance, that for a moment chained her lover in silence to the spot.

Frances silently led the way into a vacant parlor, opposite to the one in which the family were assembled, and turning to the soldier frankly, placing both her hands in his own, exclaimed,—

“Ah, Dunwoodie! how happy, on many accounts, I am to see you! I have brought you in here, to prepare you to meet an unexpected friend in the opposite room.”

“To whatever cause it may be owing,” cried the youth, pressing her hands to his lips, “I, too, am happy in being able to see you alone. Frances, the probation you have decreed is cruel; war and distance may shortly separate us forever.”

“We must submit to the necessity which governs us. But it is not love speeches I would hear now: I have other and more important matter for your attention.”

“What can be of more importance than to make you mine by a tie that will be indissoluble! Frances, you are cold to me—me—from whose mind, days of service and nights of alarm have never been able to banish your image for a single moment.”

“Dear Dunwoodie,” said Frances, softening nearly to tears, and again extending her hand to him, as the richness of her color gradually returned, “you know my sentiments—this war once ended, and you may take that hand forever—but I can never consent to tie myself to you by any closer union than already exists, so long as you are arrayed in arms against my only brother. Even now, that brother is awaiting your decision to restore him to liberty, or to conduct him to a probable death.”

“Your brother!” cried Dunwoodie, starting and turning pale; “your brother! explain yourself—what dreadful meaning is concealed in your words?”

"Has not Captain Lawton told you of the arrest of Henry by himself this very morning?" continued Frances, in a voice barely audible, and fixing on her lover a look of the deepest concern.

"He told me of arresting a captain of the 60th in disguise, but without mentioning where or whom," replied the major in a similar tone; and dropping his head between his hands, he endeavored to conceal his feelings from his companion.

"Dunwoodie! Dunwoodie!" exclaimed Frances, losing all her former confidence in the most fearful apprehensions, "what means this agitation?" As the major slowly raised his face, in which was pictured the most expressive concern, she continued, "Surely, surely, you will not betray your friend—my brother—your brother—to an ignominious death."

"Frances!" exclaimed the young man, in agony, "what can I do?"

“Do!” she repeated, gazing at him wildly; “would Major Dunwoodie yield his friend to his enemies—the brother of his betrothed wife?”

“Oh, speak not so unkindly to me, dearest Miss Wharton—my own Frances. I would this moment die for you—for Henry—but I cannot forget my duty—cannot forfeit my honor; you yourself would be the first to despise me if I did.”

“Peyton Dunwoodie!” said Frances, solemnly, and with a face of ashy paleness, “you have told me—you have sworn, that you love me—”

“I do,” interrupted the soldier, with fervor; but motioning for silence she continued, in a voice that trembled with her fears,—

“Do you think I can throw myself into the arms of a man whose hands are stained with the blood of my only brother!”

“Frances, you wring my very heart”; then pausing, to struggle with his feelings, he endeavored to force a smile, as he added, “but,

after all, we may be torturing ourselves with unnecessary fears, and Henry, when I know the circumstances, may be nothing more than a prisoner of war; in which case, I can liberate him on parole."

There is no more delusive passion than hope; and it seems to be the happy privilege of youth to cull all the pleasures that can be gathered from its indulgence. It is when we are most worthy of confidence ourselves, that we are least apt to distrust others; and what we think ought to be, we are prone to think will be.

The half-formed expectations of the young soldier were communicated to the desponding sister, more by the eye than the voice, and the blood rushed again to the cheek, as she cried,—

"Oh, there can be no just grounds to doubt it: I knew—I knew—Dunwoodie, you would never desert us in the hour of our greatest need!" The violence of her feelings prevailed, and the

agitated girl found relief in a flood of tears.

The office of consoling those we love is one of the dearest prerogatives of affection; and Major Dunwoodie, although but little encouraged by his own momentary suggestion of relief, could not undeceive the lovely girl, who leaned on his shoulder, as he wiped the traces of her feelings from her face, with a trembling, but reviving confidence in the safety of her brother, and the protection of her lover.

Frances, having sufficiently recovered her recollection to command herself, now eagerly led the way to the opposite room, to communicate to her family the pleasing intelligence which she had already conceived so certain.

Dunwoodie followed her reluctantly, and with forebodings of the result; but a few moments brought him into the presence of his relatives, and he summoned all his resolution to meet the trial with firmness.

The salutations of the young men were cordial and frank, and, on the part of Henry Wharton, as collected as if nothing had occurred to disturb his self-possession.

The abhorrence of being, in any manner, auxiliary to the arrest of his friend; the danger to the life of Captain Wharton; and the heart-breaking declarations of Frances, had, however, created an uneasiness in the bosom of Major Dunwoodie, which all his efforts could not conceal. His reception by the rest of the family was kind and sincere, both from old regard, and a remembrance of former obligations, heightened by the anticipations they could not fail to read in the expressive eyes of the blushing girl by his side. After exchanging greetings with every member of the family, Major Dunwoodie beckoned to the sentinel, whom the wary prudence of Captain Lawton had left in charge of the prisoner, to leave the room. Turn-

ing to Captain Wharton, he inquired mildly,—

“Tell me, Henry, the circumstances of this disguise, in which Captain Lawton reports you to have been found, and remember—remember—Captain Wharton—your answers are entirely voluntary.”

“The disguise was used by me, Major Dunwoodie,” replied the English officer, gravely, “to enable me to visit my friends, without incurring the danger of becoming a prisoner of war.”

“But did you not wear it, until you saw the troop of Lawton approaching?”

“Oh! no,” interrupted Frances, eagerly, forgetting all the circumstances in her anxiety for her brother; “Sarah and myself placed them on him when the dragoons appeared; it was our awkwardness that led to the discovery.”

The countenance of Dunwoodie brightened, as, turning his eyes in fondness on the speaker, he listened to her explanation.

"Probably some articles of your own," he continued, "which were at hand, and were used on the spur of the moment."

"No," said Wharton, with dignity; "the clothes were worn by me from the city; they were procured for the purpose to which they were applied, and I intended to use them in my return this very day."

The appalled Frances shrunk back from between her brother and lover, where her ardent feelings had carried her, as the whole truth glanced over her mind, and she sunk into a seat, gazing wildly on the young men.

"But the pickets—the party at the Plains?" added Dunwoodie, turning pale.

"I passed them, too, in disguise. I made use of this pass, for which I paid; and, as it bears the name of Washington, I presume it is forged."

Dunwoodie caught the paper from his hand, eagerly, and stood gazing on the signature for

some time in silence, during which the soldier gradually prevailed over the man; when he turned to the prisoner, with a searching look, as he asked,—

“Captain Wharton, whence did you procure this paper?”

“That is a question, I conceive, Major Dunwoodie has no right to ask.”

“Your pardon, sir; my feelings may have led me into an impropriety.”

Mr. Wharton, who had been a deeply interested auditor, now so far conquered his feelings as to say, “Surely, Major Dunwoodie, the paper cannot be material; such artifices are used daily in war.”

“This name is no counterfeit,” said the dragoon, studying the characters, and speaking in a low voice: “is treason yet among us undiscovered? The confidence of Washington has been abused, for the fictitious name is in a different

hand from the pass. Captain Wharton, my duty will not suffer me to grant you a parole: you must accompany me to the Highlands."

"I did not expect otherwise, Major Dunwoodie."

Dunwoodie turned slowly toward the sisters, when the figure of Frances once more arrested his gaze. She had risen from her seat, and stood again, with her hands clasped, before him in an attitude of petition: feeling himself unable to contend longer with his feelings, he made a hurried excuse for a temporary absence, and left the room. Frances followed him, and, obedient to the direction of her eye, the soldier re-entered the apartment in which had been their first interview.

"Major Dunwoodie," said Frances, in a voice barely audible, as she beckoned to him to be seated; her cheek, which had been of a chilling whiteness, was flushed with a suffusion that

crimsoned her whole countenance; she struggled with herself for a moment, and continued, "I have already acknowledged to you my esteem; even now, when you most painfully distress me, I wish not to conceal it. Believe me, Henry is innocent of everything but imprudence. Our country can sustain no wrong." Again she paused, and almost gasped for breath; her color changed rapidly from red to white, until the blood rushed into her face, covering her features with the brightest vermilion; and she added hastily, in an undertone, "I have promised, Dunwoodie, when peace shall be restored to our country, to become your wife; give to my brother his liberty on parole, and I will this day go with you to the altar, follow you to the camp, and, in becoming a soldier's bride, learn to endure a soldier's privations."

Dunwoodie seized the hand which the blushing girl, in her ardor, had extended towards him,

and pressed it for a moment to his bosom; then rising from his seat, he paced the room in excessive agitation.

"Frances, say no more, I conjure you, unless you wish to break my heart."

"You then reject my offered hand?" she said, rising with dignity, though her pale cheek and quivering lip plainly showed the conflicting passions within.

"Reject it! Have I not sought it with entreaties—with tears? Has it not been the goal of all my earthly wishes? But to take it under such conditions would be to dishonor both. We will hope for better things. Henry must be acquitted; perhaps not tried. No intercession of mine shall be wanting, you must well know; and believe me, Frances, I am not without favor with Washington."

"That very paper, that abuse of his confidence, to which you alluded, will steel him to

my brother's case. If threats or entreaties could move his stern sense of justice, would André have suffered?" As Frances uttered these words she fled from the room in despair.

Dunwoodie remained for a minute nearly stupefied; and then he followed with a view to vindicate himself, and to relieve her apprehensions. On entering the hall that divided the two parlors, he was met by a small ragged boy, who looked one moment at his dress, and placing a piece of paper in his hands, immediately vanished through the outer door of the building. The bewildered state of his mind, and the suddenness of the occurrence, gave the major barely time to observe the messenger to be a country lad, meanly attired, and that he held in his hand one of those toys which are to be bought in cities, and which he now apparently contemplated with the conscious pleasure of having fairly purchased, by the performance of the service re-

quired. The soldier turned his eyes to the subject of the note. It was written on a piece of torn and soiled paper, and in a hand barely legible; but, after some little labor, he was able to make out as follows:—

“The rig'lars are at hand, horse and foot.”*

* There died a few years since, in Bedford, Westchester, a yeoman named Elisha H——. This person was employed by Washington as one of his most confidential spies. By the conditions of their bargain, H—— was never to be required to deal with third parties, since his risks were too imminent. He was allowed to enter also into the service of Sir Henry Clinton; and so much confidence had Washington in his love of country and discretion, that he was often intrusted with the minor military movements, in order that he might enhance his value with the English general, by communicating them. In this manner, H—— had continued to serve for a long period, when chance brought him into the city (then held by the British) at a moment when an expedition was about to quit it, to go against a small post established at Bedford, his native village, where the Americans had a depot of provisions. H—— easily ascertained the force and destination of the detachment ordered on this service, but he was at a loss in what manner to communicate his information to the officer in command at Bedford, without betraying his own true character to a third person. There was not time to reach Washington, and under the circumstances, he finally resolved to hazard a short note to the American commandant, stating the danger,

Dunwoodie started; and forgetting everything but the duties of a soldier, he precipitately left the house. While walking rapidly towards the troops, he noticed on a distant hill a vidette riding with speed: several pistols were fired in quick succession; and the next instant the trumpets of the corps rang in his ears with the enlivening strain of "To arms!" By the time he had reached the ground occupied by his squad-

and naming the time when the attack might be expected. To this note he even ventured to affix his own initials, E. H., though he had disguised the hand, under a belief that, as he knew himself to be suspected by his countrymen, it might serve to give more weight to his warning. His family being at Bedford, the note was transmitted with facility, and arrived in good season, H—— himself remaining in New York.

The American commandant did what every sensible officer, in a similar case, would have done. He sent a courier with the note to Washington, demanding orders, while he prepared his little party to make the best defence in his power.

The headquarters of the American army were, at that time, in the Highlands. Fortunately, the express met Washington, on a tour of observation near their entrance. The note was given to him, and he read it in the saddle, adding, in pencil, "Believe all that E. H. tells you.

ron, the major saw that every man was in active motion. Lawton was already in the saddle, eyeing the opposite extremity of the valley with the eagerness of expectation, and crying to the musicians, in tones but little lower than their own,—

“Sound away, my lads, and let these Englishmen know that the Virginia horse are between them and the end of their journey.”

The videttes and patrols now came pouring

George Washington.” He returned it to the courier, with an injunction to ride for life or death.

The courier reached Bedford after the British had made their attack. The commandant read the reply, and put it in his pocket. The Americans were defeated, and their leader killed. The note of H——, with the line written on it by Washington, was found on his person.

The following day H—— was summoned to the presence of Sir Henry Clinton. After the latter had put several general questions, he suddenly gave the note to the spy, and asked if he knew the handwriting, and demanded who the E. H. was. “It is Elijah Hadden, the spy you hanged yesterday, at Powles Hook.” The readiness of this answer, connected with the fact that a spy having the same initials had been executed the day before, and the coolness of H——, saved him. Sir Henry Clinton allowed him to quit his presence, and he never saw him afterwards.

in, each making in succession his hasty report to the commanding officer, who gave his orders coolly, and with a promptitude that made obedience certain. Once only, as he wheeled his horse to ride over the ground in front, did Dunwoodie trust himself with a look at the cottage, and his heart beat with unusual rapidity as he saw a female figure standing, with clasped hands, at a window of the room in which he had met Frances. The distance was too great to distinguish her features, but the soldier could not doubt that it was his mistress. The paleness of his cheek and the languor of his eye endured but for a moment longer. As he rode towards the intended battle-ground, a flush of ardor began to show itself on his sunburnt features; and his dragoons, who studied the face of their leader, as the best index to their own fate, saw again the wonted flashing of the eyes, and the cheerful animation, which they had so often witnessed on

the eve of battle. By the additions of the videttes and parties that had been out, and which now had all joined, the whole number of the horse was increased to nearly two hundred. There was also a small body of men, whose ordinary duties were those of guides, but who, in cases of emergency, were embodied and did duty as foot-soldiers; these were dismounted, and proceeded, by the order of Dunwoodie, to level the few fences which might interfere with the intended movements of the cavalry. The neglect of husbandry, which had been occasioned by the war, left this task comparatively easy. Those long lines of heavy and durable walls, which now sweep through every part of the country, forty years ago were unknown. The slight and tottering fences of stone were then used more to clear the land for the purposes of cultivation than as permanent barriers, and required the constant attention of the husbandman, to preserve them

against the fury of the tempests and the frosts of winter. Some few of them had been built with more care immediately around the dwelling of Mr. Wharton; but those which had intersected the vale below were now generally a pile of ruins, over which the horses of the Virginians would bound with the fleetness of the wind. Occasionally a short line yet preserved its erect appearance; but as none of these crossed the ground on which Dunwoodie intended to act, there remained only the slighter fences of rails to be thrown down. Their duty was hastily but effectually performed; and the guides withdrew to the post assigned to them for the approaching fight.

Major Dunwoodie had received from his scouts all the intelligence concerning his foe, which was necessary to enable him to make his arrangements. The bottom of the valley was an even plain, that fell with a slight inclination

from the foot of the hills on either side, to the level of a natural meadow that wound through the country on the banks of a small stream, by whose waters it was often inundated and fertilized. This brook was easily forded in any part of its course; and the only impediment it offered to the movements of the horse, was in a place where it changed its bed from the western to the eastern side of the valley, and where its banks were more steep and difficult of access than common. Here the highway crossed it by a rough wooden bridge, as it did again at the distance of half a mile above the Locusts.

The hills on the eastern side of the valley were abrupt, and frequently obtruded themselves in rocky prominences into its bosom, lessening the width to half the usual dimensions. One of these projections was but a short distance in the rear of the squadron of dragoons, and Dunwoodie directed Captain Lawton to withdraw,

with two troops, behind its cover. The officer obeyed with a kind of surly reluctance, that was, however, somewhat lessened by the anticipations of the effect his sudden appearance would make on the enemy. Dunwoodie knew his man, and had selected the captain for this service, both because he feared his precipitation in the field, and knew, when needed, his support would never fail to appear. It was only in front of the enemy that Captain Lawton was hasty; at all other times his discernment and self-possession were consummately preserved; but he sometimes forgot them in his eagerness to engage. On the left of the ground on which Dunwoodie intended to meet his foe, was a close wood, which skirted that side of the valley for the distance of a mile. Into this, then, the guides retired, and took their station near its edge, in such a manner as would enable them to maintain a scattering, but effectual fire, on the advancing column of the enemy.

It cannot be supposed that all these preparations were made unheeded by the inmates of the cottage; on the contrary, every feeling which can agitate the human breast, in witnessing such a scene, was actively alive. Mr. Wharton alone saw no hopes to himself in the termination of the conflict. If the British should prevail, his son would be liberated; but what would then be his own fate! He had hitherto preserved his neutral character in the midst of trying circumstances. The fact of his having a son in the royal, or, as it was called, the regular army, had very nearly brought his estates to the hammer. Nothing had obviated this result, but the powerful interest of the relation who held a high political rank in the State, and his own vigilant prudence. In his heart, he was a devoted loyalist; and when the blushing Frances had communicated to him the wishes of her lover, on their return from the American camp the preceding spring, the con-

sent he had given to her future union with a rebel, was as much extracted by the increasing necessity which existed for his obtaining republican support, as by any considerations for the happiness of his child. Should his son now be rescued, he would, in the public mind, be united with him as a plotter against the freedom of the States; and should he remain a captive, and undergo the impending trial, the consequences might be still more dreadful. Much as he loved his wealth, Mr. Wharton loved his children better; and he sat gazing on the movements without, with a listless vacancy in his countenance, that fully denoted his imbecility of character.

Far different were the feelings of the son. Captain Wharton had been left in the keeping of two dragoons, one of whom marched to and fro on the piazza with a measured tread, and the other had been directed to continue in the same apartment with his prisoner. The young

man had witnessed all the movements of Dunwoodie with admiration mingled with fearful anticipations of the consequences to his friends. He particularly disliked the ambush of the detachment under Lawton, who could be distinctly seen from the windows of the cottage, cooling his impatience, by pacing on foot the ground in front of his men. Henry Wharton threw several hasty and inquiring glances around, to see if no means of liberation would offer, but invariably found the eyes of his sentinel fixed on him with the watchfulness of an Argus. He longed, with the ardor of youth, to join in the glorious fray, but was compelled to remain a dissatisfied spectator of a scene in which he would so cheerfully have been an actor. Miss Peyton and Sarah continued gazing on the preparations with varied emotions, in which concern for the fate of the captain formed the most prominent feeling, until the moment the shedding of blood seemed

approaching, when, with the timidity of their sex, they sought the retirement of an inner room. Not so Frances: she returned to the apartment where she had left Dunwoodie, and, from one of its windows, had been a deeply interested spectator of all his movements. The wheelings of the troops, the deadly preparations, had all been unnoticed; she saw her lover only, and with mingled emotions of admiration and dread that nearly chilled her. At one moment the blood rushed to her heart, as she saw the young warrior riding through his ranks, giving life and courage to all whom he addressed; and the next, it curdled with the thought that the very gallantry she so much valued might prove the means of placing the grave between her and the object of her regard. Frances gazed until she could look no longer.

In a field on the left of the cottage, and at a short distance in the rear of the troops, was a

small group, whose occupation seemed to differ from that of all around them. They were in number only three, being two men and a mulatto boy. The principal personage of this party was a man, whose leanness made his really tall stature appear excessive. He wore spectacles—was unarmed, had dismounted, and seemed to be dividing his attention between a cigar, a book, and the incidents of the field before him. To this party Frances determined to send a note, directed to Dunwoodie. She wrote hastily, with a pencil, "Come to me, Peyton, if it be but for a moment"; and Cæsar emerged from the cellar kitchen, taking the precaution to go by the rear of the building, to avoid the sentinel on the piazza, who had very cavalierly ordered all the family to remain housed. The black delivered the note to the gentleman, with a request that it might be forwarded to Major Dunwoodie. It was the surgeon of the horse to whom Cæsar ad-

dressed himself; and the teeth of the African chattered, as he saw displayed upon the ground the several instruments which were in preparation for the anticipated operations. The doctor himself seemed to view the arrangement with great satisfaction, as he deliberately raised his eyes from his book to order the boy to convey the note to his commanding officer, and then dropping them quietly on the page, he continued his occupation. Cæsar was slowly retiring, as the third personage, who by his dress might be an inferior assistant of the surgical department, coolly inquired "if he would have a leg taken off?" This question seemed to remind the black of the existence of those limbs; for he made such use of them as to reach the piazza at the same instant that Major Dunwoodie rode up, at half speed. The brawny sentinel squared himself, and poised his sword with military precision, as he stood on his post, while his officer passed; but no

sooner had the door closed, than, turning to the negro, he said, sharply,—

“Harkee, blackey, if you quit the house again without my knowledge, I shall turn barber, and shave off one of those ebony ears with this razor.”

Thus assailed in another member, Cæsar hastily retreated into his kitchen, muttering something, in which the words “Skinner,” and “rebel rascal,” formed a principal part of speech.

“Major Dunwoodie,” said Frances to her lover as he entered, “I may have done you injustice; if I have appeared harsh—”

The emotions of the agitated girl prevailed, and she burst into tears.

“Frances,” cried the soldier with warmth, “you are never harsh, never unjust, but when you doubt my love.”

“Ah! Dunwoodie,” added the sobbing girl, “you are about to risk your life in battle; remem-

ber that there is one heart whose happiness is built on your safety; brave I know you are; be prudent—”

“For your sake?” inquired the delighted youth.

“For my sake,” replied Frances, in a voice barely audible, and dropping on his bosom.

Dunwoodie folded her to his heart, and was about to speak, as a trumpet sounded in the southern end of the vale. Imprinting one long kiss of affection on her unresisting lips, the soldier tore himself from his mistress, and hastened to the scene of strife.

Frances threw herself on a sofa, buried her head under its cushion, and with her shawl drawn over her face, to exclude as much of sound as possible, continued there until the shouts of the combatants, the rattling of the fire-arms, and the thundering tread of the horses, had ceased.

CHAPTER VII

"The game's afoot;
Follow your spirit."

SHAKESPEARE

THE rough and unimproved face of the country, the frequency of covers, together with the great distance from their own country, and the facilities afforded them for rapid movements to the different points of the war, by the undisputed command of the ocean, had united to deter the English from employing a heavy force in cavalry, in their early efforts to subdue the revolted colonies.

Only one regiment of regular horse was sent from the mother country, during the struggle. But legions and independent corps were formed in different places, as it best accorded with the views of the royal commanders, or suited the exigency of the times. These were not unfrequently composed of men raised in the colonies,

and at other times drafts were had from the regiments of the line, and the soldier was made to lay aside the musket and bayonet, and taught to wield the sabre and carabine. One particular body of the subsidiary troops was included in this arrangement, and the Hessian yagers were transformed into a corps of heavy and inactive horse.

Opposed to them were the hardiest spirits of America. Most of the cavalry regiments of the continental army were led and officered by gentlemen from the South. The high and haughty courage of the commanders had communicated itself to the privates, who were men selected with care and great attention to the service they were intended to perform.

While the British were confined to their empty conquests in the possession of a few of the larger towns, or marched through counties that were swept of everything like military sup-

plies, the light troops of their enemies had the range of the whole interior.

The sufferings of the line of the American army were great beyond example; but possessing the power, and feeling themselves engaged in a cause which justified severity, the cavalry officers were vigilant in providing for their wants, and the horse were well mounted, well fed, and consequently eminently effective. Perhaps the world could not furnish more brave, enterprising, and resistless corps of light cavalry, than a few that were in the continental service at the time of which we write.

Dunwoodie's men had often tried their prowess against the enemy, and they now sat panting to be led once more against foes whom they seldom charged in vain. Their wishes were soon to be gratified; for their commander had scarcely time to regain his seat in the saddle, before a body of the enemy came sweeping round the

base of the hill, which intersected the view to the south. A few minutes enabled the major to distinguish their character. In one troop he saw the green coats of the Cow-Boys, and in the other the leathern helmets and wooden saddles of the yagers. Their numbers were about equal to the body under his immediate orders.

On reaching the open space near the cottage of Harvey Birch, the enemy halted and drew up his men in line, evidently making preparations for a charge. At this moment a column of foot appeared in the vale, and pressed forward to the bank of the brook we have already mentioned.

Major Dunwoodie was not less distinguished by coolness and judgment, than, where occasion offered, by his dauntless intrepidity. He at once saw his advantage, and determined to profit by it. The column he led began slowly to retire from the field, when the youthful German, who commanded the enemy's horse, fearful of miss-

ing an easy conquest, gave the word to charge. Few troops were more hardy than the Cow-Boys; they sprang eagerly forward in the pursuit, with a confidence created by the retiring foe and the column in their rear; the Hessians followed more slowly, but in better order. The trumpets of the Virginians now sounded long and lively; they were answered by a strain from the party in ambush that went to the hearts of their enemies. The column of Dunwoodie wheeled in perfect order, opened, and, as the word to charge was given, the troops of Lawton emerged from their cover, with their leader in advance, waving his sabre over his head, and shouting, in a voice that was heard above the clangor of the martial music.

The charge threatened too much for the refugee troop. They scattered in every direction, flying from the field as fast as their horses, the chosen beasts of Westchester, could carry them. Only a few were hurt: but such as did meet the

arms of their avenging countrymen never survived the blow, to tell who struck it. It was upon the poor vassals of the German tyrant that the shock fell. Disciplined to the most exact obedience, these ill-fated men met the charge bravely, but they were swept before the mettled horses and nervous arms of their antagonists like chaff before the wind. Many of them were literally ridden down, and Dunwoodie soon saw the field without an opposing foe. The proximity of the infantry prevented pursuit, and behind its column the few Hessians who escaped unhurt sought protection.

The more cunning refugees dispersed in small bands, taking various and devious routes back to their old station in front of Harlaem. Many were the sufferers, in cattle, furniture, and person, that were created by this rout; for the dispersion of a troop of Cow-Boys was only the extension of an evil.

Such a scene could not be expected to be acted so near them, and the inmates of the cottage take no interest in the result. In truth, the feelings it excited pervaded every bosom, from the kitchen to the parlor. Terror and horror had prevented the ladies from being spectators, but they did not feel the less. Frances continued lying in the posture we have mentioned, offering up fervent and incoherent petitions for the safety of her countrymen, although in her inmost heart she had personified her nation by the graceful image of Peyton Dunwoodie. Her aunt and sister were less exclusive in their devotions; but Sarah began to feel, as the horrors of war were thus brought home to her senses, less pleasure in her anticipated triumphs.

The inmates of Mr. Wharton's kitchen were four, namely, Cæsar and his spouse, their granddaughter, a jet-black damsel of twenty, and the boy before alluded to. The blacks were the rem-

nants of a race of negroes which had been entailed on his estate from Mr. Wharton's maternal ancestors, who were descended from the early Dutch colonists. Time, depravity, and death had reduced them to this small number: and the boy, who was white, had been added by Miss Peyton to the establishment, as an assistant, to perform the ordinary services of a footman. Cæsar, after first using the precaution to place himself under the cover of an angle in the wall, for a screen against any roving bullet which might be traversing the air, became an amused spectator of the skirmish. The sentinel on the piazza was at a distance of but a few feet from him, and he entered into the spirit of the chase with all the ardor of a tried bloodhound: he noticed the approach of the black, and his judicious position, with a smile of contempt, as he squared himself towards the enemy, offering his unprotected breast to any dangers which might come.

After considering the arrangement of Cæsar, for a moment, with ineffable disdain, the dragoon said, with great coolness,—

“You seem very careful of that beautiful person of yours, Mr. Blueskin.”

“A bullet hurt a colored man as much as a white,” muttered the black, surlily, casting a glance of much satisfaction at his rampart.

“Suppose I make the experiment,” returned the sentinel: as he spoke, he deliberately drew a pistol from his belt, and levelled it at the black. Cæsar’s teeth chattered at the appearance of the dragoon, although he believed nothing serious was intended. At this moment the column of Dunwoodie began to retire, and the royal cavalry commenced their charge.

“There, Mister Light-Horseman,” said Cæsar, eagerly, who believed the Americans were retiring in earnest; “why you rebels don’t fight—see—see how King George’s men make Major Dun-

woodie run! Good gentleman, too, but he don't like to fight a rig'lar."

"Damn your regulars," cried the other, fiercely: "wait a minute, blackey, and you'll see Captain Jack Lawton come out from behind yonder hill, and scatter these Cow-Boys like wild geese who've lost their leader."

Cæsar supposed the party under Lawton to have sought the shelter of the hill from motives similar to that which had induced him to place the wall between himself and the battle-ground; but the fact soon verified the trooper's prophecy, and the black witnessed with consternation the total rout of the royal horse.

The sentinel manifested his exultation at the success of his comrades with loud shouts, which soon brought his companion, who had been left in the more immediate charge of Henry Wharton, to the open window of the parlor.

"See, Tom, see," cried the delighted trooper,

“how Captain Lawton makes that Hessian’s leather cap fly; and now the major has killed the officer’s horse—zounds, why didn’t he kill the Dutchman, and save the horse?”

A few pistols were discharged at the flying Cow-Boys, and a spent bullet broke a pane of glass within a few feet of Cæsar. Imitating the posture of the great tempter of our race, the black sought the protection of the inside of the building, and immediately ascended to the parlor.

The lawn in front of the Locusts was hidden from the view of the road by a close line of shrubbery, and the horses of the two dragoons had been left, linked together, under its shelter, to await the movements of their masters.

At this moment two Cow-Boys, who had been cut off from a retreat to their own party, rode furiously through the gate, with an intention of escaping to the open wood in the rear of the cottage.

The victorious Americans pressed the retreating Germans until they had driven them under the protection of the fire of the infantry; and feeling themselves, in the privacy of the lawn, relieved from any immediate danger, the predatory warriors yielded to a temptation that few of the corps were ever known to resist—opportunity and horseflesh. With a hardihood and presence of mind that could only exist from long practice in similar scenes, they made towards their intended prizes, by an almost spontaneous movement. They were busily engaged in separating the fastenings of the horses, when the trooper on the piazza discharged his pistols, and rushed, sword in hand, to the rescue.

The entrance of Cæsar into the parlor had induced the wary dragoon within to turn his attention more closely on his prisoner; but his new interruption drew him again to the window. He threw his body out of the building, and with

dreadful imprecations endeavored, by his threats and appearance, to frighten the marauders from their prey. The moment was enticing. Three hundred of his comrades were within a mile of the cottage; unriden horses were running at large in every direction, and Henry Wharton seized the unconscious sentinel by his legs, and threw him headlong into the lawn. Cæsar vanished from the room, and drew a bolt of the outer door.

The fall of the soldier was not great, and recovering his feet, he turned his fury for a moment on his prisoner. To scale the window in the face of such an enemy, was, however, impossible, and on trial he found the main entrance barred.

His comrade now called loudly upon him for aid, and forgetful of everything else, the discomfited trooper rushed to his assistance. One horse was instantly liberated, but the other was

already fastened to the saddle of a Cow-Boy, and the four retired behind the building, cutting furiously at each other with their sabres, and making the air resound with their imprecations. Cæsar threw the outer door open, and pointing to the remaining horse, that was quietly biting the faded herbage of the lawn, he exclaimed,—

“Run—now—run—Massa Harry, run.”

“Yes, cried the youth as he vaulted into the saddle, “now, indeed, my honest fellow, is the time to run.” He beckoned hastily to his father, who stood at the window in speechless anxiety, with his hands extended towards his child in the attitude of benediction, and adding, “God bless you, Cæsar, salute the girls,” he dashed through the gate, with the rapidity of lightning.

The African watched him with anxiety as he gained the highway, saw him incline to the right, and riding furiously under the brow of some rocks, which on that side rose perpendicu-

larly, disappear behind a projection, which soon hid him from view.

The delighted Cæsar closed the door, pushing bolt after bolt, and turning the key until it would turn no more, soliloquizing the whole time on the happy escape of his young master.

“How well he ride—teach him good deal myself—salute a young lady—Miss Fanny wouldn’t let the old colored man kiss a red cheek.”

When the fortune of the day was decided, and the time arrived for the burial of the dead, two Cow-Boys and a Virginian were found in the rear of the Locusts, to be included in the number.

Happily for Henry Wharton, the searching eyes of his captor were examining, through a pocket-glass, the column of infantry that still held its position on the bank of the stream, while the remnants of the Hessian yagers were seeking its friendly protection. His horse was of the best

blood of Virginia, and carried him with the swiftness of the wind along the valley; and the heart of the youth was already beating tumultuously with pleasure at his deliverance, when a well-known voice reached his startled ear, crying aloud,—

“Bravely done, captain! Don’t spare the whip, and turn to your left before you cross the brook.”

Wharton turned his head in surprise, and saw, sitting on the point of a jutting rock that commanded a bird’s-eye view of the valley, his former guide, Harvey Birch. His pack, much diminished in size, lay at the feet of the pedler, who waved his hat to the youth, exultingly, as the latter flew by him. The English captain took the advice of this mysterious being, and finding a good road, which led to the highway that intersected the valley, turned down its direction, and was soon opposite to his friends. The next minute he crossed the bridge, and stopped his

charger before his old acquaintance, Colonel Wellmere.

"Captain Wharton!" exclaimed the astonished commander of the English troops, "dressed in mohair, and mounted on a rebel dragoon horse! are you from the clouds in this attire, and in such a style?"

"Thank God!" cried the youth, recovering his breath, "I am safe, and have escaped from the hands of my enemies; but five minutes since and I was a prisoner, and threatened with the gallows."

"The gallows, Captain Wharton! surely those traitors to the king would never dare to commit another murder in cold blood; is it not enough that they took the life of André? wherefore did they threaten you with a similar fate?"

"Under the pretence of a similar offence," said the captain, briefly explaining to the group of listeners the manner of his capture, the grounds of his personal apprehensions, and the

method of his escape. By the time he had concluded his narration, the fugitive Germans were collected in the rear of the column of infantry, and Colonel Wellmere cried aloud,—

“From my soul I congratulate you, my brave friend; mercy is a quality with which these traitors are unacquainted, and you are doubly fortunate in escaping from their hands uninjured. Prepare yourself to grant me your assistance, and I will soon afford you a noble revenge.”

“I do not think there was danger of personal outrage to any man, Colonel Wellmere, from a party that Major Dunwoodie commands,” returned young Wharton, with a slight glow on his face: “his character is above the imputation of such an offence; neither do I think it altogether prudent to cross this brook into the open plain, in the face of those Virginian horse, flushed as they must be with the success they have just obtained.”

“Do you call the rout of those irregulars and these sluggish Hessians a deed to boast of?” said the other with a contemptuous smile: “you speak of the affair, Captain Wharton, as if your boasted Mr. Dunwoodie, for major he is none, had discomfited the body guards of your king.”

“And I must be allowed to say, Colonel Wellmere, that if the body guards of my king were in yon field, they would meet a foe that it would be dangerous to despise. Sir, my boasted Mr. Dunwoodie is the pride of Washington’s army as a cavalry officer,” cried Henry, with warmth.

“Dunwoodie, Dunwoodie!” repeated the colonel slowly; “surely I have met the gentleman before.”

“I have been told you once saw him for a moment, at the town residence of my sisters,” replied Wharton, with a lurking smile.

“Ah! I do remember me of such a youth; and does the most potent Congress of these rebel-

lious colonies intrust their soldiers to the leading of such a warrior!"

"Ask the commander of yon Hessian horse, whether he thinks Major Dunwoodie worthy of their confidence."

Colonel Wellmere was far from wanting that kind of pride which makes a man bear himself bravely in the presence of his enemies. He had served in America a long time, without ever meeting with any but new raised levies, or the militia of the country. These would sometimes fight, and that fearlessly, but they as often chose to run away without pulling a trigger. He was too apt to judge from externals, and thought it impossible for men whose gaiters were so clean, whose tread so regular, and who wheeled with so much accuracy, to be beaten. In addition to all these, they were Englishmen, and their success was certain. Colonel Wellmere had never been kept much in the field, or these notions, which he had

brought with him from home, and which had been greatly increased by the vapping of a garri-soned town, would have long since vanished. He listened to the warm reply of Captain Wharton with a supercilious smile, and then inquired,—

“You would not have us retire, sir, before these boasted horsemen, without doing something that may deprive them of part of the glory which you appear to think they have gained!”

“I would have you advised, Colonel Wellmere, of the danger you are about to encounter.”

“Danger is but an unseemly word for a soldier,” continued the British commander with a sneer.

“And one as little dreaded by the 60th as any corps who wear the royal livery,” cried Henry Wharton, fiercely; “give but the word to charge, and let our actions speak.”

“Now again I know my young friend,” said Wellmere, soothingly; “but if you have any-

thing to say before we fight, that can in any manner help us in our attack, we'll listen. You know the force of the rebels; are there more of them in ambush?"

"Yes," replied the youth, chafing still under the other's sneers, "in the skirt of this wood on our right are a small party of foot: their horse are all before you."

"Where they will not continue long," cried Wellmere, turning to the few officers around him. "Gentlemen, we will cross the stream in column, and display on the plain beyond, or else we shall not be able to entice these valiant Yankees within the reach of our muskets. Captain Wharton, I claim your assistance as an aide-de-camp."

The youth shook his head in disapprobation of a movement which his good sense taught him was rash, but prepared with alacrity to perform his duty in the impending trial.

During this conversation, which was held at a small distance in advance of the British column, and in full view of the Americans, Dunwoodie had been collecting his scattered troops, securing his few prisoners, and retiring to the ground where he had been posted at the first appearance of his enemy. Satisfied with the success he had already obtained, and believing the English too wary to give him an opportunity of harassing them further, he was about to withdraw the guides; and, leaving a strong party on the ground to watch the movements of the regulars, to fall back a few miles, to a favorable place for taking up his quarters for the night. Captain Lawton was reluctantly listening to the reasoning of his commander, and had brought out his favorite glass, to see if no opening could be found for an advantageous attack, when he suddenly exclaimed,—

“How’s this! a blue coat among those scarlet

gentry? As I hope to live to see old Virginia, it is my masquerading friend of the 60th, the handsome Captain Wharton, escaped from two of my best men!"

He had not done speaking when the survivor of these heroes joined his troop, bringing with them his own horse and those of the Cow-Boys; he reported the death of his comrade, and the escape of his prisoner. As the deceased was the immediate sentinel over the person of young Wharton, and the other was not to be blamed for defending the horses, which were more particularly under his care, his captain heard him with uneasiness but without anger.

The intelligence made an entire change in the views of Major Dunwoodie. He saw at once that his own reputation was involved in the escape of his prisoner. The order to recall the guides was countermanded, and he now joined his second in command, watching as eagerly as the impetu-

ous Lawton himself, for some opening to assail his foe to advantage.

But two hours before, and Dunwoodie had felt the chance which made Henry Wharton his captive, as the severest blow he had ever sustained. Now he panted for an opportunity in which, by risking his own life, he might recapture his friend. All other considerations were lost in the goadings of a wounded spirit, and he might have soon emulated Lawton in hardihood, had not Wellmere and his troops at this moment crossed the brook into the open plain.

“There,” cried the delighted captain, as he pointed out the movement with his finger, “there comes John Bull into the mouse-trap, and with eyes wide open.”

“Surely,” said Dunwoodie, eagerly, “he will not display his column on that flat; Wharton must tell him of the ambush. But if he does—”

“We will not leave him a dozen sound skins

in his battalion," interrupted the other, springing into his saddle.

The truth was soon apparent; for the English column, after advancing for a short distance on the level land, displayed with an accuracy that would have done them honor on a field-day in their own Hyde Park.

"Prepare to mount—mount!" cried Dunwoodie; the last word being repeated by Lawton in a tone that rang in the ears of Cæsar, who stood at the open window of the cottage. The black recoiled in dismay, having lost all his confidence in Captain Lawton's timidity; for he thought he yet saw him emerging from his cover and waving his sword on high.

As the British line advanced slowly and in exact order, the guides opened a galling fire. It began to annoy that part of the royal troops which was nearest to them. Wellmere listened to the advice of the veteran who was next to him

in rank, and ordered two companies to dislodge the American foot from their hiding-place. The movement created a slight confusion; and Dunwoodie seized the opportunity to charge. No ground could be more favorable for the manœuvres of horse, and the attack of the Virginians was irresistible. It was aimed chiefly at the bank opposite to the wood, in order to clear the Americans from the fire of their friends who were concealed; and it was completely successful. Wellmere, who was on the left of his line, was overthrown by the impetuous fury of his assailants. Dunwoodie was in time to save him from the impending blow of one of his men, and raised him from the ground, had him placed on a horse, and delivered to the custody of his orderly. The officer who had suggested the attack upon the guides had been intrusted with its execution, but the menace was sufficient for these irregulars. In fact, their duty was performed,

and they retired along the skirt of the wood, with intent to regain their horses, which had been left under a guard at the upper end of the valley.

The left of the British line was outflanked by the Americans, who doubled in their rear, and thus made the rout in that quarter total. But the second in command, perceiving how the battle went, promptly wheeled his party, and threw in a heavy fire on the dragoons, as they passed him to the charge; with this party was Henry Wharton, who had volunteered to assist in dispersing the guides: a ball struck his bridle-arm, and compelled him to change hands. As the dragoons dashed by them, rending the air with their shouts, and with trumpets sounding a lively strain, the charger ridden by the youth became ungovernable—he plunged, reared, and his rider being unable with his wounded arm, to manage the impatient animal, Henry Wharton found him-

self, in less than a minute, unwillingly riding by the side of Captain Lawton. The dragoon comprehended at a glance the ludicrous situation of his new comrade, but had only time to cry aloud, before they plunged into the English line,—

“The horse knows the righteous cause better than his rider. Captain Wharton, you are welcome to the ranks of freedom.”

No time was lost, however, by Lawton, after the charge was completed, in securing his prisoner again; and perceiving him to be hurt, he directed him to be conveyed to the rear.

The Virginian troopers dealt out their favors, with no gentle hands, on that part of the royal foot who were thus left in a great measure at their mercy. Dunwoodie, observing that the remnant of the Hessians had again ventured on the plain, led on in pursuit, and easily overtaking their light and half-fed horses, soon destroyed the remainder of the detachment.

In the meanwhile, great numbers of the English, taking advantage of the smoke and confusion in the field, were enabled to get in the rear of the body of their countrymen, which still preserved its order in a line parallel to the wood, but which had been obliged to hold its fire, from the fear of injuring friends as well as foes. The fugitives were directed to form a second line within the wood itself, and under cover of the trees. This arrangement was not yet completed, when Captain Lawton called to a youth, who commanded the other troop left with that part of the force which remained on the ground, and proposed charging the unbroken line of the British. The proposal was as promptly accepted as it had been made, and the troops were arrayed for the purpose. The eagerness of their leader prevented the preparations necessary to ensure success, and the horse, receiving a destructive fire as they advanced, were thrown into additional

confusion. Both Lawton and his more juvenile comrade fell at this discharge. Fortunately for the credit of the Virginians, Major Dunwoodie re-entered the field at this critical instant; he saw his troops in disorder; at his feet, weltering in blood, lay George Singleton, a youth endeared to him by numberless virtues, and Lawton was unhorsed and stretched on the plain. The eye of the youthful warrior flashed fire. Riding between this squadron and the enemy, in a voice that reached the hearts of his dragoons, he recalled them to their duty. His presence and words acted like magic. The clamor of voices ceased; the line was formed promptly and with exactitude; the charge sounded; and, led on by their commander, the Virginians swept across the plain with an impetuosity that nothing could withstand, and the field was instantly cleared of the enemy: those who were not destroyed sought a shelter in the woods. Dunwoodie slowly with-

drew from the fire of the English who were covered by the trees, and commenced the painful duty of collecting his dead and wounded.

The sergeant charged with conducting Henry Wharton to a place where he might procure surgical aid, set about performing his duty with alacrity, in order to return as soon as possible to the scene of strife. They had not reached the middle of the plain, before the captain noticed a man whose appearance and occupation forcibly arrested his attention. His head was bald and bare, but a well-powdered wig was to be seen, half-concealed, in the pocket of his breeches. His coat was off, and his arms were naked to the elbow; blood had disfigured much of his dress, and his hands, and even face, bore this mark of his profession; in his mouth was a cigar; in his right hand some instruments of strange formation, and in his left the remnants of an apple, with which he occasionally relieved the duty of

the before-mentioned cigar. He was standing, lost in the contemplation of a Hessian, who lay breathless before him. At a little distance were three or four of the guides, leaning on their muskets, and straining their eyes in the direction of the combatants, and at his elbow stood a man who, from the implements in his hand, and his bloody vestments, seemed an assistant.

"There, sir, is the doctor," said the attendant of Henry, very coolly; "he will patch up your arm in the twinkling of an eye"; and beckoning to the guides to approach, he whispered and pointed to his prisoner, and then galloped furiously toward his comrades.

Wharton advanced to the side of this strange figure, and observing himself to be unnoticed, was about to request his assistance, when the other broke silence in a soliloquy:—

"Now, I know this man to have been killed by Captain Lawton, as well as if I had seen him

strike the blow. How often have I strove to teach him the manner in which he can disable his adversary, without destroying life! It is cruel thus unnecessarily to cut off the human race, and furthermore, such blows as these render professional assistance unnecessary; it is in a measure treating the lights of science with disrespect."

"If, sir, your leisure will admit," said Henry Wharton, "I must beg your attention to a slight hurt."

"Ah!" cried the other, starting, and examining him from head to foot, "you are from the field below; is there much business there, sir?"

"Indeed," answered Henry, accepting the offer of the surgeon to assist in removing his coat, "'tis a stirring time, I can assure you."

"Stirring!" repeated the surgeon, busily employed with his dressings; "you give me great pleasure, sir; for so long as they can stir there must be life; and while there is life, you know,

there is hope; but here my art is of no use. I did put in the brains of one patient, but I rather think the man must have been dead before I saw him. It is a curious case, sir; I will take you to see it—only across the fence there, where you may perceive so many bodies together. Ah! the ball has glanced around the bone without shattering it; you are fortunate in falling into the hands of an old practitioner, or you might have lost this limb.”

“Indeed!” said Henry, with a slight uneasiness; “I did not apprehend the injury to be so serious.”

“Oh! the hurt is not bad, but you have such a pretty arm for an operation; the pleasure of the thing might have tempted a novice.”

“The devil!” cried the captain; “can there be any pleasure in mutilating a fellow-creature?”

“Sir,” said the surgeon, with gravity, “a scientific amputation is a very pretty operation,

and doubtless might tempt a younger man, in the hurry of business, to overlook all the particulars of the case."

Further conversation was interrupted by the appearance of the dragoons, slowly marching towards their former halting-place, and new applications from the slightly wounded soldiers, who now came riding in, making hasty demands on the skill of the doctor.

The guides took charge of Wharton, and, with a heavy heart, the young man retraced his steps to his father's cottage.

The English had lost in the several charges about one third of their foot, but the remainder were rallied in the wood; and Dunwoodie, perceiving them to be too strongly posted to assail, had left a strong party with Captain Lawton, with orders to watch their motions, and to seize every opportunity to harass them before they embarked.

Intelligence had reached the major of another party being out, by the way of the Hudson, and his duty required that he should hold himself in readiness to defeat the intentions of these also. Captain Lawton received his orders with strong injunctions to make no assault on the foe, unless a favorable chance should offer.

The injury received by this officer was in the head, being stunned by a glancing bullet; and parting with a laughing declaration from the major, that if he again forgot himself, they should all think him more materially hurt, each took his own course.

The British were a light party without baggage, that had been sent out to destroy certain stores, understood to be collecting for the use of the American army. They now retired through the woods to the heights, and, keeping the route along their summits, in places unassailable by cavalry, commenced a retreat to their boats.

CHAPTER VIII

“With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide;
And many a childing mother then,
And new-born infant, died;
But things like these, you know, must be
At every famous victory.”

SOUTHEY

THE last sounds of the combat died on the ears of the anxious listeners in the cottage, and were succeeded by the stillness of suspense. Frances had continued by herself, striving to exclude the uproar, and vainly endeavoring to summon resolution to meet the dreaded result. The ground where the charge on the foot had taken place was but a short mile from the Locusts, and, in the intervals of the musketry, the cries of the soldiers had even reached the ears of its inhabitants. After witnessing the escape of his son, Mr. Wharton had joined his sister and eldest daughter in their retreat, and the three continued fearfully waiting for news from the

field. Unable longer to remain under the painful uncertainty of her situation, Frances soon added herself to the uneasy group, and Cæsar was directed to examine into the state of things without, and report on whose banners victory had alighted. The father now briefly related to his astonished children the circumstance and manner of their brother's escape. They were yet in the freshness of their surprise, when the door opened, and Captain Wharton, attended by a couple of the guides, and followed by the black, stood before them.

"Henry—my son, my son," cried the agitated parent, stretching out his arms, yet unable to rise from his seat; "what is it I see; are you again a captive, and in danger of your life?"

"The better fortune of these rebels has prevailed," said the youth, endeavoring to force a cheerful smile, and taking a hand of each of his distressed sisters. "I strove nobly for my liberty;

but the perverse spirit of rebellion has even lighted on their horses. The steed I mounted carried me, greatly against my will, I acknowledge, into the very centre of Dunwoodie's men."

"And you were again captured," continued the father, casting a fearful glance on the armed attendants who had entered the room.

"That, sir, you may safely say; this Mr. Lawton, who sees so far, had me in custody again immediately."

"Why you no hold 'em in, Massa Harry?" cried Cæsar, pettishly.

"That," said Wharton, smiling, "was a thing easier said than done, Mr. Cæsar, especially as these gentlemen" (glancing his eyes at the guides) "had seen proper to deprive me of the use of my better arm."

"Wounded!" exclaimed both sisters in a breath.

"A mere scratch, but disabling me at a most

critical moment," continued the brother, kindly, and stretching out the injured limb to manifest the truth of his declaration. Cæsar threw a look of bitter animosity on the irregular warriors who were thought to have had an agency in the deed, and left the room. A few more words sufficed to explain all that Captain Wharton knew relative to the fortune of the day. The result he thought yet doubtful, for when he left the ground, the Virginians were retiring from the field of battle.

"They had tree'd the squirrel," said one of the sentinels, abruptly, "and didn't quit the ground without leaving a good hound for the chase when he comes down."

"Ay," added his comrade, dryly, "I'm thinking Captain Lawton will count the noses of what are left before they see their whale-boats."

Frances had stood supporting herself by the back of a chair, during this dialogue, catching, in breathless anxiety, every syllable as it was ut-

tered; her color changed rapidly; her limbs shook under her; until, with desperate resolution, she inquired,—

“Is any officer hurt on—the—on either side?”

“Yes,” answered the man cavalierly, “these Southern youths are so full of mettle, that it’s seldom we fight but one or two gets knocked over; one of the wounded, who came up before the troops, told me that Captain Singleton was killed, and Major Dunwoodie—”

Frances heard no more, but fell lifeless in the chair behind her. The attention of her friends soon revived her, when the captain, turning to the man, said, fearfully,—

“Surely Major Dunwoodie is unhurt?”

“Never fear him,” added the guide, disregarding the agitation of the family; “they say a man who is born to be hanged will never be drowned: if a bullet could kill the major, he would have been dead long ago. I was going to

say, that the major is in a sad taking because of the captain's being killed; but had I known how much store the lady set by him, I wouldn't have been so plain-spoken."

Frances now rose quickly from her seat, with cheeks glowing with confusion, and, leaning on her aunt, was about to retire, when Dunwoodie himself appeared. The first emotion of the agitated girl was unalloyed happiness; in the next instant she shrank back appalled from the unusual expression that reigned in his countenance. The sternness of battle yet sat on his brow; his eye was fixed and severe. The smile of affection that used to lighten his dark features on meeting his mistress, was supplanted by the lowering look of care; his whole soul seemed to be absorbed in one engrossing emotion, and he proceeded at once to his object.

"Mr. Wharton," he earnestly began, "in times like these, we need not stand on idle ceremony:

one of my officers, I am afraid, is hurt mortally; and presuming on your hospitality, I have brought him to your door."

"I am happy, sir, that you have done so," said Mr. Wharton, at once perceiving the importance of conciliating the American troops; "the necessities are always welcome, and doubly so, in being the friend of Major Dunwoodie."

"Sir, I thank you for myself, and in behalf of him who is unable to render you his thanks," returned the other, hastily; "if you please, we will have him conducted where the surgeon may see and report upon his case without delay." To this there could be no objection; and Frances felt a chill at her heart, as her lover withdrew, without casting a solitary look on herself.

There is a devotedness in female love that admits of no rivalry. All the tenderness of the heart, all the powers of the imagination, are enlisted in behalf of the tyrant passion; and where

all is given, much is looked for in return. Frances had spent hours of anguish, of torture, on account of Dunwoodie, and he now met her without a smile, and left her without a greeting. The ardor of her feelings was unabated, but the elasticity of her hopes was weakened. As the supporters of the nearly lifeless body of Dunwoodie's friend passed her, in their way to the apartment prepared for his reception, she caught a view of this seeming rival.

His pale and ghastly countenance, sunken eye, and difficult breathing, gave her a glimpse of death in its most fearful form. Dunwoodie was by his side, and held his hand, giving frequent and stern injunctions to the men to proceed with care, and, in short, manifesting all the solicitude that the most tender friendship could, on such an occasion, inspire. Frances moved lightly before them, and, with an averted face, she held open the door for their passage to the bed; it

was only as the major touched her garments, on entering the room, that she ventured to raise her mild blue eyes to his face. But the glance was unreturned, and Frances unconsciously sighed as she sought the solitude of her own apartment.

Captain Wharton voluntarily gave a pledge to his keepers not to attempt again escaping, and then proceeded to execute those duties on behalf of his father, which were thought necessary in a host. On entering the passage for that purpose, he met the operator who had so dexterously dressed his arm, advancing to the room of the wounded officer.

“Ah!” cried the disciple of Esculapius, “I see you are doing well; but stop; have you a pin? No! here, I have one; you must keep the cold air from your hurt, or some of the youngsters will be at work at you yet.”

“God forbid,” muttered the captain, in an undertone, attentively adjusting the bandages,

when Dunwoodie appeared at the door, impatiently crying aloud,—

“Hasten, Sitgreaves, hasten; or George Singleton will die from loss of blood.”

“What! Singleton! God forbid! Bless me—is it George—poor little George?” exclaimed the surgeon, as he quickened his pace with evident concern, and hastened to the side of the bed; “he is alive, though, and while there is life there is hope. This is the first serious case I have had to-day, where the patient was not already dead. Captain Lawton teaches his men to strike with so little discretion—poor George—bless me, it is a musket bullet.”

The youthful sufferer turned his eyes on the man of science, and with a faint smile endeavored to stretch forth his hand. There was an appeal in the look and action that touched the heart of the operator. The surgeon removed his spectacles to wipe an unusual moisture from his

eyes, and proceeded carefully to the discharge of his duty. While the previous arrangements were, however, making, he gave vent in some measure to his feelings, by saying,—

“When it is only a bullet, I have always some hopes; there is a chance that it hits nothing vital; but, bless me, Captain Lawton’s men cut so at random—generally sever the jugular or the carotid artery, or let out the brains, and all are so difficult to remedy—the patient mostly dying before one can get at him. I never had success but once in replacing a man’s brains, although I have tried three this very day. It is easy to tell where Lawton’s troop charge in a battle, they cut so at random.”

The group around the bed of Captain Singleton were too much accustomed to the manner of their surgeon to regard or to reply to his soliloquy; but they quietly awaited the moment when he was to commence his examination. This now

took place, and Dunwoodie stood looking the operator in the face, with an expression that seemed to read his soul. The patient shrunk from the application of the probe, and a smile stole over the features of the surgeon, as he muttered,—

“There has been nothing before it in that quarter.” He now applied himself in earnest to his work, took off his spectacles, and threw aside his wig. All this time Dunwoodie stood in feverish silence, holding one of the hands of the sufferer in both his own, watching the countenance of Dr. Sitgreaves. At length Singleton gave a slight groan, and the surgeon rose with alacrity, and said aloud,—

“Ah! there is some pleasure in following a bullet; it may be said to meander through the human body, injuring nothing vital; but as for Captain Lawton’s men—”

“Speak,” interrupted Dunwoodie; “is there hope?—can you find the ball?”

"It's no difficult matter to find that which one has in his hand, Major Dunwoodie," replied the surgeon, coolly, preparing his dressings. "It took what that literal fellow, Captain Lawton, calls a circumbendibus, a route never taken by the swords of his men, notwithstanding the multiplied pains I have been at to teach him how to cut scientifically. Now, I saw a horse this day with his head half severed from his body."

"That," said Dunwoodie, as the blood rushed to his cheeks again, and his dark eyes sparkled with the rays of hope, "was some of my handiwork; I killed that horse myself."

"You!" exclaimed the surgeon, dropping his dressing in surprise, "you! but you knew it was a horse!"

"I had such suspicions, I own," said the major, smiling, and holding a beverage to the lips of his friend.

"Such blows alighting on the human frame

are fatal," continued the doctor, pursuing his business; "they set at naught the benefits which flow from the lights of science; they are useless in a battle, for disabling your foe is what is required. I have sat, Major Dunwoodie, many a cold hour, while Captain Lawton has been engaged, and after all my expectation, not a single case worth recording has occurred—all scratches or death-wounds; ah! the sabre is a sad weapon in unskilful hands! Yes, Major Dunwoodie, many are the hours I have thrown away in endeavoring to impress this truth on Captain John Lawton."

The impatient major pointed silently to his friend, and the surgeon quickened his movements.

"Ah! poor George, it is a narrow chance; but —" he was interrupted by a message requiring the presence of the commanding officer in the field. Dunwoodie pressed the hand of his friend,

and beckoned the doctor to follow him, as he withdrew.

“What think you?” he whispered, on reaching the passage; “will he live?”

“He will.”

“Thank God!” cried the youth, hastening below.

Dunwoodie for a moment joined the family, who were now collecting in the ordinary parlor. His face was no longer wanting in smiles, and his salutations, though hasty, were cordial. He took no notice of the escape and recapture of Henry Wharton, but seemed to think the young man had continued where he had left him before the encounter. On the ground they had not met. The English officer withdrew in haughty silence to a window, leaving the major uninterrupted to make his communications.

The excitement produced by the events of the

day in the youthful feelings of the sisters, had been succeeded by a languor that kept them both silent, and Dunwoodie held his discourse with Miss Peyton.

"Is there any hope, my cousin, that your friend can survive his wound?" said the lady advancing towards her kinsman, with a smile of benevolent regard.

"Everything, my dear madam, everything," answered the soldier, cheerfully. "Sitgreaves says he will live, and he has never deceived me."

"Your pleasure is not much greater than our own at this intelligence. One so dear to Major Dunwoodie cannot fail to excite an interest in the bosom of his friends."

"Say one so deservedly dear, madam," returned the major, with warmth: "he is the beneficent spirit of the corps, equally beloved by us all; so mild, so equal, so just, so generous, with the meekness of a lamb and the fondness of a

dove—it is only in the hour of battle that Singleton is a lion.”

“You speak of him as if he were your mistress, Major Dunwoodie,” observed the smiling spinster, glancing her eye at her niece, who sat pale and listening, in a corner of the room.

“I love him as one,” cried the excited youth; “but he requires care and nursing; all now depends on the attention he receives.”

“Trust me, sir, he will want for nothing under this roof.”

“Pardon me, dear madam; you are all that is benevolent, but Singleton requires a care which many men would feel to be irksome. It is at moments like these, and in sufferings like this, that a soldier most finds the want of female tenderness.” As he spoke, he turned his eyes on Frances with an expression that again thrilled to the heart of his mistress: she rose from her seat with burning cheeks, and said,—

"All the attention that can with propriety be given to a stranger will be cheerfully bestowed on your friend."

"Ah!" cried the major, shaking his head, "that cold word propriety will kill him; he must be fostered, cherished, soothed."

"These are offices for a sister or a wife."

"A sister!" repeated the soldier, the blood rushing to his own face tumultuously; "a sister! he has a sister; and one that might be here with tomorrow's sun." He paused, mused in silence, glanced his eyes uneasily at Frances, and muttered in an undertone, "Singleton requires it, and it must be done."

The ladies had watched his varying countenance in some surprise, and Miss Peyton now observed that,—

"If there were a sister of Captain Singleton near them, her presence would be gladly requested both by herself and nieces."

"It must be, madam; it cannot well be otherwise," replied Dunwoodie, with a hesitation that but ill agreed with his former declarations; "she shall be sent for express this very night." And then, as if willing to change the subject, he approached Captain Wharton, and continued, mildly,—

"Henry Wharton, to me honor is dearer than life; but in your hands I know it can safely be confided; remain here unwatched, until we leave the country, which will not be for some days."

The distance in the manner of the English officer vanished, and taking the offered hand of the other, he replied with warmth, "Your generous confidence, Peyton, will not be abused, even though the gibbet on which your Washington hung André be ready for my own execution."

"Henry, Henry Wharton," said Dunwoodie, reproachfully, "you little know the man that

leads our armies, or you would have spared him that reproach; but duty calls me without. I leave you where I could wish to stay myself, and where you cannot be wholly unhappy."

In passing Frances, she received another of those smiling looks of affection she so much prized, and for a season the impression made by his appearance after the battle was forgotten.

Among the veterans that had been impelled by the times to abandon the quiet of age for the service of their country, was Colonel Singleton. He was a native of Georgia, and had been for the earlier years of his life a soldier by profession. When the struggle for liberty commenced, he offered his services to his country, and from respect to his character they had been accepted. His years and health had, however, prevented his discharging the active duties of the field, and he had been kept in command of different posts of trust, where his country might receive the

benefits of his vigilance and fidelity without inconvenience to himself. For the last year he had been intrusted with the passes into the Highlands, and was now quartered, with his daughter, but a short day's march above the valley where Dunwoodie had met the enemy. His only other child was the wounded officer we have mentioned. Thither, then, the major prepared to despatch a messenger with the unhappy news of the captain's situation, and charged with such an invitation from the ladies as he did not doubt would speedily bring the sister to the couch of her brother.

This duty performed, though with an unwillingness that only could make his former anxiety more perplexing, Dunwoodie proceeded to the field where his troops had halted. The remnant of the English were already to be seen, over the tops of the trees, marching along the heights toward their boats, in compact order and with

great watchfulness. The detachment of the dragoons under Lawton were a short distance on their flank, eagerly awaiting a favorable moment to strike a blow. In this manner both parties were soon lost to view.

A short distance above the Locusts was a small hamlet, where several roads intersected each other, and from which, consequently, access to the surrounding country was easy. It was a favorite halting-place of the horse, and frequently held by the light parties of the American army during their excursions below. Dunwoodie had been the first to discover its advantages, and as it was necessary for him to remain in the county until further orders from above, it cannot be supposed he overlooked them now. To this place the troops were directed to retire, carrying with them their wounded; parties were already employed in the sad duty of interring the dead. In making these arrangements, a new

object of embarrassment presented itself to our young soldier. In moving through the field, he was struck with the appearance of Colonel Wellmere, seated by himself, brooding over his misfortunes, uninterrupted by anything but the passing civilities of the American officers. His anxiety on behalf of Singleton had hitherto banished the recollection of his captive from the mind of Dunwoodie, and he now approached him with apologies for his neglect. The Englishman received his courtesies with coolness, and complained of being injured by what he affected to think was the accidental stumbling of his horse. Dunwoodie, who had seen one of his own men ride him down, and that with very little ceremony, slightly smiled, as he offered him surgical assistance. This could only be procured at the cottage, and thither they both proceeded.

“Colonel Wellmere!” cried young Wharton in astonishment as they entered, “has the fortune

of war been thus cruel to you also?—but you are welcome to the house of my father, although I could wish the introduction to have taken place under more happy circumstances.”

Mr. Wharton received this new guest with the guarded caution that distinguished his manner, and Dunwoodie left the room to seek the bedside of his friend. Everything here looked propitious, and he acquainted the surgeon that another patient waited his skill in the room below. The sound of the word was enough to set the doctor in motion, and seizing his implements of office, he went in quest of this new applicant. At the door of the parlor he was met by the ladies, who were retiring. Miss Peyton detained him for a moment, to inquire into the welfare of Captain Singleton. Frances smiled with something of her natural archness of manner, as she contemplated the grotesque appearance of the bald-headed practitioner; but Sarah

was too much agitated, with the surprise of the unexpected interview with the British colonel, to observe him. It has already been intimated that Colonel Wellmere was an old acquaintance of the family. Sarah had been so long absent from the city, that she had in some measure been banished from the remembrance of the gentleman; but the recollections of Sarah were more vivid. There is a period in the life of every woman when she may be said to be predisposed to love; it is at the happy age when infancy is lost in opening maturity—when the guileless heart beats with those anticipations of life which the truth can never realize—and when the imagination forms images of perfection that are copied after its own unsullied visions. At this happy age Sarah left the city, and she had brought with her a picture of futurity, faintly impressed, it is true, but which gained durability from her solitude, and in which Wellmere had been placed in the

foreground. The surprise of the meeting had in some measure overpowered her, and after receiving the salutations of the colonel, she had risen, in compliance with a signal from her observant aunt, to withdraw.

"Then, sir," observed Miss Peyton, after listening to the surgeon's account of his young patient, "we may be flattered with the expectation that he will recover."

"'Tis certain, madam," returned the doctor, endeavoring, out of respect to the ladies, to replace his wig, "'tis certain, with care and good nursing."

"In those he shall not be wanting," said the spinster, mildly. "Everything we have he can command, and Major Dunwoodie has despatched an express for his sister."

"His sister!" echoed the practitioner, with a look of particular meaning; "if the major has sent for her, she will come."

"Her brother's danger would induce her, one would imagine."

"No doubt, madam," continued the doctor, laconically, bowing low, and giving room to the ladies to pass. The words and the manner were not lost on the younger sister, in whose presence the name of Dunwoodie was never mentioned unheeded.

"Sir," cried Dr. Sitgreaves, on entering the parlor, addressing himself to the only coat of scarlet in the room, "I am advised you are in want of my aid. God send 'tis not Captain Lawton with whom you came in contact, in which case I may be too late."

"There must be some mistake, sir," said Wellmere, haughtily; "it was a surgeon that Major Dunwoodie was to send me, and not an old woman."

"'Tis Dr. Sitgreaves," said Henry Wharton, quickly, though with difficulty suppressing a

laugh; "the multitude of his engagements, to-day, has prevented his usual attention to his attire."

"Your pardon, sir," added Wellmere, very ungraciously proceeding to lay aside his coat, and exhibit what he called a wounded arm.

"If, sir," said the surgeon, dryly, "the degrees of Edinburgh—walking your London hospitals—amputating some hundreds of limbs—operating on the human frame in every shape that is warranted by the lights of science, a clear conscience, and the commission of the Continental Congress, can make a surgeon, I am one."

"Your pardon, sir," repeated the colonel, stiffly. "Captain Wharton has accounted for my error."

"For which I thank Captain Wharton," said the surgeon, proceeding coolly to arrange his amputating instruments, with a formality that made the colonel's blood run cold. "Where are

you hurt, sir? What! is it then this scratch in your shoulder? In what manner might you have received this wound, sir?"

"From the sword of a rebel dragoon," said the colonel, with emphasis.

"Never. Even the gentle George Singleton would not have breathed on you so harmlessly." He took a piece of sticking-plaster from his pocket, and applied it to the part. "There, sir; that will answer your purpose, and I am certain it is all that is required of me."

"What do you take to be my purpose, then, sir?"

"To report yourself wounded in your despatches," replied the doctor, with great steadiness; "and you may say that an old woman dressed your hurts—for if one did not, one easily might!"

"Very extraordinary language," muttered the Englishman.

Here Captain Wharton interfered; and, by explaining the mistake of Colonel Wellmere to proceed from his irritated mind and pain of body, he in part succeeded in mollifying the insulted practitioner, who consented to look further into the hurts of the other. They were chiefly bruises from his fall, to which Sitgreaves made some hasty applications, and withdrew.

The horse, having taken their required refreshment, prepared to fall back to their intended position, and it became incumbent on Dunwoodie to arrange the disposal of his prisoners. Sitgreaves he determined to leave in the cottage of Mr. Wharton, in attendance on Captain Singleton. Henry came to him with a request that Colonel Wellmere might also be left behind, under his parole, until the troops marched higher into the country. To this the major cheerfully assented; and as all the rest of the prisoners were of the vulgar herd, they were

speedily collected, and, under the care of a strong guard, ordered to the interior. The dragoons soon after marched; and the guides, separating in small parties, accompanied by patrols from the horse, spread themselves across the country, in such a manner as to make a chain of sentinels from the waters of the Sound to those of the Hudson.*

Dunwoodie had lingered in front of the cottage, after he paid his parting compliments, with an unwillingness to return, that he thought proceeded from his solicitude for his wounded friends. The heart which has not become callous, soon sickens with the glory that has been purchased with a waste of human life. Peyton Dunwoodie, left to himself, and no longer excited by the visions which youthful ardor had kept before him throughout the day, began to

* The scene of this tale is between these two waters, which are but a few miles from each other.

feel there were other ties than those which bound the soldier within the rigid rules of honor. He did not waver in his duty, yet he felt how strong was the temptation. His blood had ceased to flow with the impulse created by the battle. The stern expression of his eye gradually gave place to a look of softness; and his reflections on the victory brought with them no satisfaction that compensated for the sacrifices by which it had been purchased. While turning his last lingering gaze on the Locusts, he remembered only that it contained all that he most valued. The friend of his youth was a prisoner, under circumstances that endangered both life and honor. The gentle companion of his toils, who could throw around the rude enjoyments of a soldier the graceful mildness of peace, lay a bleeding victim to his success. The image of the maid who had held, during the day, a disputed sovereignty in his bosom, again rose to his view

with a loveliness that banished her rival, glory, from his mind.

The last lagging trooper of the corps had already disappeared behind the northern hill, and the major unwillingly turned his horse in the same direction. Frances, impelled by a restless inquietude, now timidly ventured on the piazza of the cottage. The day had been mild and clear, and the sun was shining brightly in a cloudless sky. The tumult, which so lately disturbed the valley, was succeeded by the stillness of death, and the fair scene before her looked as if it had never been marred by the passions of men. One solitary cloud, the collected smoke of the contest, hung over the field; and this was gradually dispersing, leaving no vestige of the conflict above the peaceful graves of its victims. All the conflicting feelings, all the tumultuous circumstances of the eventful day, appeared like the deceptions of a troubled vision. Frances turned,

and caught a glimpse of the retreating figure of him who had been so conspicuous an actor in the scene, and the illusion vanished. She recognized her lover, and, with the truth, came other recollections that drove her to her room, with a heart as sad as that which Dunwoodie himself bore from the valley.

CHAPTER IX

"A moment gazed adown the dale,
A moment snuffed the tainted gale,
A moment listened to the cry,
That thickened as the chase drew nigh ;
Then, as the headmost foe appeared,
With one brave bound the copse he cleared.
And, stretching forward free and far,
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var."

Lady of the Lake

THE party under Captain Lawton had watched the retiring foe to his boats with the most unremitting vigilance, without finding any fit opening for a charge. The experienced successor of Colonel Wellmere knew too well the power of his enemy to leave the uneven surface of the heights, until compelled to descend to the level of the water. Before he attempted this hazardous movement, he threw his men into a compact square, with its outer edges bristling with bayonets. In this position, the impatient trooper well understood that brave men could never be assailed by cavalry with success,

and he was reluctantly obliged to hover near them, without seeing any opportunity of stopping their slow but steady march to the beach. A small schooner, which had been their convoy from the city, lay with her guns bearing on the place of embarkation. Against this combination of force and discipline, Lawton had sufficient prudence to see it would be folly to contend, and the English were suffered to embark without molestation. The dragoons lingered on the shore till the last moment, and then they reluctantly commenced their own retreat back to the main body of the corps.

The gathering mists of the evening had begun to darken the valley, as the detachment of Lawton made its reappearance, at its southern extremity. The march of the troops was slow, and their line extended, for the benefit of ease. In the front rode the captain, side by side with his senior subaltern, apparently engaged in close con-

ference, while the rear was brought up by a young cornet, humming an air, and thinking of the sweets of a straw bed after the fatigues of a hard day's duty.

"Then it struck you too?" said the captain. "The instant I placed my eyes on her, I remembered the face; it is one not easily forgotten. By my faith, Tom, the girl does no discredit to the major's taste."

"She would do honor to the corps," replied the lieutenant, with some warmth; "those blue eyes might easily win a man to gentler employments than this trade of ours. In sober truth, I can easily imagine such a girl might tempt even me to quit the broadsword and saddle, for a darning-needle and pillion."

"Mutiny, sir, mutiny," cried the other, laughing; "what, you, Tom Mason, dare to rival the gay, admired, and withal rich, Major Dunwoodie in his love! You, a lieutenant of cavalry,

with but one horse, and he none of the best! whose captain is as tough as a pepperidge log, and has as many lives as a cat!"

"Faith," said the subaltern, smiling in his turn, "the log may yet be split, and Grimalkin lose his lives, if you often charge as madly as you did this morning. What think you of many raps from such a beetle as laid you on your back today?"

"Ah! don't mention it, my good Tom; the thought makes my head ache," replied the other, shrugging up his shoulders; "it is what I call forestalling night."

"The night of death?"

"No, sir, the night that follows day. I saw myriads of stars, things which should hide their faces in the presence of the lordly sun. I do think nothing but this thick cap saved me for your comfort a little longer, maugre the cat's lives."

"I have much reason to be obliged to the cap," said Mason, dryly; "that or the skull must have

had a reasonable portion of thickness, I admit."

"Come, come, Tom, you are a licensed joker, so I'll not feign anger with you," returned the captain, good-humoredly; "but Singleton's lieutenant, I am fearful, will fare better than yourself for this day's service."

"I believe both of us will be spared the pain of receiving promotion purchased by the death of a comrade and friend," observed Mason, kindly; "it was reported that Sitgreaves said he would live."

"From my soul I hope so," exclaimed Lawton: "for a beardless face, that boy carries the stoutest heart I have ever met with. It surprises me, however, that, as we both fell at the same instant, the men behaved so well."

"For the compliment, I might thank you," cried the lieutenant with a laugh; "but modesty forbids; I did my best to stop them, but without success."

"Stop them!" roared the captain; "would you stop men in the middle of a charge?"

"I thought they were going the wrong way," answered the subaltern.

"Ah! our fall drove them to the right about?"

"It was either your fall, or apprehensions of their own; until the major rallied us, we were in admirable disorder."

"Dunwoodie! the major was on the crupper of the Dutchman."

"Ah! but he managed to get off the crupper of the Dutchman. He came in, at half-speed, with the other two troops, and riding between us and the enemy, with that imperative way he has when roused, brought us in line in the twinkling of an eye. Then it was," added the lieutenant, with animation, "that we sent John Bull to the bushes. Oh! it was a sweet charge—heads and tails, until we were upon them."

"The devil! What a sight I missed!"

"You slept through it all."

"Yes," returned the other, with a sigh; "it was all lost to me and poor George Singleton. But, Tom, what will George's sister say to this fair-haired maiden, in yonder white building?"

"Hang herself in her garters," said the subaltern. "I owe a proper respect to my superiors, but two such angels are more than justly falls to the share of one man, unless he be a Turk or a Hindoo."

"Yes, yes," said the captain, quickly, "the major is ever preaching morality to the youngsters, but he is a sly fellow in the main. Do you observe how fond he is of the cross roads above the valley? Now, if I were to halt the troops twice in the same place, you would all swear there was a petticoat in the wind."

"You are well known to the corps."

"Well, Tom, a slanderous propensity is incurable—but," stretching forward his body in the

direction he was gazing, as if to aid him in distinguishing objects through the darkness, "what animal is moving through the field on our right?"

"'Tis a man," said Mason, looking intently at the suspicious object.

"By his hump 'tis a dromedary!" added the captain, eyeing it keenly. Wheeling his horse suddenly from the highway, he exclaimed, "Harvey Birch!—take him, dead or alive!"

Mason and a few of the leading dragoons only understood the sudden cry, but it was heard throughout the line. A dozen of the men, with their lieutenant at their head, followed the impetuous Lawton, and their speed threatened the pursued with a sudden termination of the race.

Birch prudently kept his position on the rock, where he had been seen by the passing glance of Henry Wharton, until evening had begun to shroud the surrounding objects in darkness.

From this height he had seen all the events of the day as they occurred. He had watched, with a beating heart, the departure of the troops under Dunwoodie, and with difficulty had curbed his impatience until the obscurity of night should render his moving free from danger. He had not, however, completed a fourth of the way to his own residence, when his quick ear distinguished the tread of the approaching horse. Trusting to the increasing darkness, he determined to persevere. By crouching and moving quickly along the surface of the ground, he hoped yet to escape unseen. Captain Lawton was too much engrossed with the foregoing conversation to suffer his eyes to indulge in their usual wandering; and the pedler, perceiving by the voices that the enemy he most feared had passed, yielded to his impatience, and stood erect, in order to make greater progress. The moment his body arose above the shadow of the ground, it

was seen, and the chase commenced. For a single instant, Birch was helpless, his blood curdling in his veins at the imminence of the danger, and his legs refusing their natural and necessary office. But it was only for a moment. Casting his pack where he stood, and instinctively tightening the belt he wore, the pedler betook himself to flight. He knew that by bringing himself in a line with his pursuers and the wood, his form would be lost to sight. This he soon effected, and he was straining every nerve to gain the wood itself, when several horsemen rode by him but a short distance on his left, and cut him off from this place of refuge. The pedler threw himself on the ground as they came near him, and was passed unseen. But delay now became too dangerous for him to remain in that position. He accordingly arose, and still keeping in the shadow of the wood, along the skirts of which he heard voices crying to each other to be watchful, he ran

with incredible speed in a parallel line, but in an opposite direction, to the march of the dragoons.

The confusion of the chase had been heard by the whole of the men, though none distinctly understood the order of Lawton but those who followed. The remainder were lost in doubt as to the duty that was required of them; and the aforesaid cornet was making eager inquiries of the trooper near him on the subject, when a man, at a short distance in the rear, crossed the road at a single bound. At the same instant, the stentorian voice of Lawton rang through the valley, shouting,—

“Harvey Birch—take him, dead or alive!”

Fifty pistols lighted the scene, and the bullets whistled in every direction round the head of the devoted pedler. A feeling of despair seized his heart, and in the bitterness of that moment he exclaimed,—

“Hunted like a beast of the forest!”

He felt life and its accompaniments to be a burden, and was about to yield himself to his enemies. Nature, however, prevailed. If taken, there was great reason to apprehend that he would not be honored with the forms of a trial, but that most probably the morning sun would witness his ignominious execution; for he had already been condemned to death, and had only escaped that fate by stratagem. These considerations, with the approaching footsteps of his pursuers, roused him to new exertions. He again fled before them. A fragment of a wall, that had withstood the ravages made by war in the adjoining fences of wood, fortunately crossed his path. He hardly had time to throw his exhausted limbs over this barrier, before twenty of his enemies reached its opposite side. Their horses refused to take the leap in the dark, and amid the confusion of the rearing chargers, and the execrations of their riders, Birch was enabled to

gain a sight of the base of the hill, on whose summit was a place of perfect security. The heart of the pedler now beat high with hope, when the voice of Captain Lawton again rang in his ears, shouting to his men to make room. The order was obeyed, and the fearless trooper rode at the wall at the top of his horse's speed, plunged the rowels in his charger, and flew over the obstacle in safety. The triumphant hurrahs of the men, and the thundering tread of the horse, too plainly assured the pedler of the emergency of his danger. He was nearly exhausted, and his fate no longer seemed doubtful.

"Stop, or die!" was uttered above his head, and in fearful proximity to his ears.

Harvey stole a glance over his shoulder, and saw, within a bound of him, the man whom he most dreaded. By the light of the stars he beheld the uplifted arm and the threatening sabre! Fear, exhaustion, and despair, seized his heart, and

the intended victim fell at the feet of the dragoon. The horse of Lawton struck the prostrate pedler, and both steed and rider came violently to the earth.

As quick as thought, Birch was on his feet again, with the sword of the discomfited dragoon in his hand. Vengeance seems but too natural to human passions. There are few who have not felt the seductive pleasure of making our injuries recoil on their authors; and yet there are some who know how much sweeter it is to return good for evil.

All the wrongs of the pedler shone on his brain with a dazzling brightness. For a moment the demon within him prevailed, and Birch brandished the powerful weapon in the air; in the next, it fell harmless on the reviving but helpless trooper. The pedler vanished up the side of the friendly rock.

“Help Captain Lawton, there!” cried Mason,

as he rode up, followed by a dozen of his men; "and some of you dismount with me, and search these rocks; the villain lies here concealed."

"Hold!" roared the discomfited captain, raising himself with difficulty on his feet; "if one of you dismount, he dies. Tom, my good fellow, you will help me to straddle Roanoke again."

The astonished subaltern complied in silence, while the wondering dragoons remained as fixed in their saddles, as if they composed part of the animals they rode.

"You are much hurt, I fear," said Mason, with something of condolence in his manner, as they re-entered the highway, and biting off the end of a cigar for the want of a better quality of tobacco.

"Something so, I do believe," replied the captain, catching his breath, and speaking with difficulty; "I wish our bone-setter was at hand, to examine into the state of my ribs."

"Sitgreaves is left in attendance on Captain Singleton, at the house of Mr. Wharton."

"Then there I halt for the night, Tom. These rude times must abridge ceremony; besides, you may remember the old gentleman professed a kinsman's regard for the corps. I can never think of passing so good a friend without a halt."

"And I will lead the troop to the Four Corners; if we all halt there, we shall breed a famine in the land."

"A condition I never desire to be placed in. The idea of that graceful spinster's cakes is no bad solace for twenty-four hours in the hospital."

"Oh! you won't die if you can think of eating," said Mason, with a laugh.

"I should surely die if I could not," observed the captain, gravely.

"Captain Lawton," said the orderly of his troop, riding to the side of his commanding offi-

cer, "we are now passing the house of the pedler spy; is it your pleasure that we burn it?"

"No!" roared the captain, in a voice that startled the disappointed sergeant: "are you an incendiary? would you burn a house in cold blood? let but a spark approach, and the hand that carries it will never light another."

"Zounds!" muttered the sleepy cornet in the rear, as he was nodding on his horse, "there is life in the captain, notwithstanding his tumble."

Lawton and Mason rode on in silence, the latter ruminating on the wonderful change produced in his commander by his fall, when they arrived opposite to the gate before the residence of Mr. Wharton. The troop continued its march; but the captain and his lieutenant dismounted, and, followed by the servant of the former, they proceeded slowly to the door of the cottage.

Colonel Wellmere had already sought a retreat in his own room; Mr. Wharton and his son

were closeted by themselves: and the ladies were administering the refreshments of the tea-table to the surgeon of the dragoons, who had seen one of his patients in his bed, and the other happily enjoying the comforts of a sweet sleep. A few natural inquiries from Miss Peyton had opened the soul of the doctor, who knew every individual of her extensive family connection in Virginia, and who even thought it possible that he had seen the lady herself. The amiable spinster smiled as she felt it to be improbable that she should ever have met her new acquaintance before, and not remember his singularities. It however gently relieved the embarrassment of their situation, and something like a discourse was maintained between them; the nieces were only listeners, nor could the aunt be said to be much more.

“As I was observing, Miss Peyton, it was merely the noxious vapors of the low lands that

rendered the plantation of your brother an unfit residence for man; but quadrupeds were—”

“Bless me, what’s that?” said Miss Peyton, turning pale at the report of the pistols fired at Birch.

“It sounds prodigiously like the concussion on the atmosphere made by the explosion of fire-arms,” said the surgeon, sipping his tea with great indifference. “I should imagine it to be the troop of Captain Lawton returning, did I not know the captain never uses the pistol, and that he dreadfully abuses the sabre.”

“Merciful providence!” exclaimed the agitated maiden, “he would not injure one with it, certainly.”

“Injure!” repeated the other, quickly: “it is certain death, madam; the most random blows imaginable; all that I can say to him will have no effect.”

“But Captain Lawton is the officer we saw

this morning, and is surely your friend," said Frances, hastily, observing her aunt to be seriously alarmed.

"I find no fault with his want of friendship; the man is well enough if he would learn to cut scientifically. All trades, madam, ought to be allowed to live; but what is to become of a surgeon, if his patients are dead before he sees them!"

The doctor continued haranguing on the probability and improbability of its being the returning troop, until a loud knock at the door gave new alarm to the ladies. Instinctively laying his hand on a small saw, that had been his companion for the whole day, in the vain expectation of an amputation, the surgeon, coolly assuring the ladies that he would stand between them and danger, proceeded in person to answer the summons.

"Captain Lawton!" exclaimed the surgeon, as

he beheld the trooper leaning on the arm of his subaltern, and with difficulty crossing the threshold.

“Ah! my dear bone-setter, is it you? You are here very fortunately to inspect my carcass; but do lay aside that rascally saw!”

A few words from Mason explained the nature and manner of his captain's hurts, and Miss Peyton cheerfully accorded the required accommodations. While the room intended for the trooper was getting ready, and the doctor was giving certain portentous orders, the captain was invited to rest himself in the parlor. On the table was a dish of more substantial food than ordinarily adorned the afternoon's repast, and it soon caught the attention of the dragoons. Miss Peyton, recollecting that they had probably made their only meal that day at her own table, kindly invited them to close it with another. The offer required no pressing, and in a few minutes the

two were comfortably seated, and engaged in an employment that was only interrupted by an occasional wry face from the captain, who moved his body in evident pain. These interruptions, however, interfered but little with the principal business in hand; and the captain had got happily through with this important duty, before the surgeon returned to announce all things ready for his accommodation, in the room above stairs.

“Eating!” cried the astonished physician; “Captain Lawton, do you wish to die?”

“I have no particular ambition that way,” said the trooper, rising and bowing good-night to the ladies, “and, therefore, have been providing the materials necessary to preserve life.”

The surgeon muttered his dissatisfaction, while he followed Mason and the captain from the apartment.

Every house in America had, at that day, what was emphatically called its best room, and this

had been allotted, by the unseen influence of Sarah, to Colonel Wellmere. The down counterpane, which a clear, frosty night would render extremely grateful over bruised limbs, decked the English officer's bed. A massive silver tankard, richly embossed with the Wharton arms, held the beverage he was to drink during the night; while beautiful vessels of china performed the same office for the two American captains. Sarah was certainly unconscious of the silent preference she had been giving to the English officer; and it is equally certain, that but for his hurts, bed, tankard, and everything but the beverage, would have been matters of indifference to Captain Lawton, half of whose nights were spent in his clothes, and not a few of them in the saddle. After taking possession, however, of a small but very comfortable room, Doctor Sitgreaves proceeded to inquire into the state of his injuries. He had begun to pass his hand over the

body of his patient, when the latter cried impatiently,—

“Sitgreaves, do me the favor to lay that rascally saw aside, or I shall have recourse to my sabre in self-defence; the sight of it makes my blood cold.”

“Captain Lawton, for a man who has so often exposed life and limb, you are unaccountably afraid of a very useful instrument.”

“Heaven keep me from its use,” said the trooper, with a shrug.

“You would not despise the lights of science, nor refuse surgical aid, because this saw might be necessary?”

“I would.”

“You would!”

“Yes; you shall never joint me like a quarter of beef, while I have life to defend myself,” cried the resolute dragoon. “But I grow sleepy; are any of my ribs broken?”

"No."

"Any of my bones?"

"No."

"Tom, I'll thank you for that pitcher." As he ended his draught, he very deliberately turned his back on his companions, and good-naturedly cried, "Good-night, Mason; good-night Galen."

Captain Lawton entertained a profound respect for the surgical abilities of his comrade, but he was very skeptical on the subject of administering internally for the ailings of the human frame. With a full stomach, a stout heart, and a clear conscience, he often maintained that a man might bid defiance to the world and its vicissitudes. Nature provided him with the second, and, to say the truth, he strove manfully himself to keep up the other two requisites in his creed. It was a favorite maxim with him, that the last thing death assailed was the eyes, and next to the last, the jaws. This he inter-

puted to be a clear expression of the intention of nature, that every man might regulate, by his own volition, whatever was to be admitted into the sanctuary of his mouth; consequently, if the guest proved unpalatable, he had no one to blame but himself. The surgeon, who was well acquainted with these views of his patient, beheld him, as he cavalierly turned his back on Mason and himself, with a commiserating contempt, replaced in their leathern repository the phials he had exhibited, with a species of care that was allied to veneration, gave the saw, as he concluded, a whirl of triumph, and departed, without condescending to notice the compliment of the trooper. Mason, finding by the breathing of the captain, that his own good-night would be unheard, hastened to pay his respects to the ladies—after which he mounted, and followed the troop at the top of his horse's speed.

CHAPTER X

"On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires,
E'en from the tomb the voice of nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires."

GRAY

THE possessions of Mr. Wharton extended to some distance on each side of the house in which he dwelt, and most of his land was unoccupied. A few scattered dwellings were to be seen in different parts of his domains, but they were fast falling to decay, and were untenanted. The proximity of the country to the contending armies had nearly banished the pursuits of agriculture from the land. It was useless for the husbandman to devote his time, and the labor of his hands, to obtain overflowing garners, that the first foraging party would empty. None tilled the earth with any other view than to provide the scanty means of subsistence, except those who were placed so near to one of the adverse

parties as to be safe from the inroads of the light troops of the other. To these the war offered a golden harvest, more especially to such as enjoyed the benefits of an access to the royal army. Mr. Wharton did not require the use of his lands for the purposes of subsistence; and he willingly adopted the guarded practice of the day, limiting his attention to such articles as were soon to be consumed within his own walls, or could be easily secreted from the prying eyes of the foragers. In consequence, the ground on which the action was fought had not a single inhabited building, besides the one belonging to the father of Harvey Birch. This house stood between the place where the cavalry had met, and that where the charge had been made on the party of Wellmere.

To Katy Haynes it had been a day fruitful of incidents. The prudent housekeeper had kept her political feelings in a state of rigid neutrality; her own friends had espoused the cause of

the country, but the maiden herself never lost sight of that important moment, when, like females of more illustrious hopes, she might be required to sacrifice her love of her country on the altar of domestic harmony. And yet, notwithstanding all her sagacity, there were moments when the good woman had grievous doubts into which scale she ought to throw the weight of her eloquence, in order to be certain of supporting the cause favored by the pedler. There was so much that was equivocal in his movements and manner, that often, when, in the privacy of their household, she was about to offer a philippic on Washington and his followers, discretion sealed her mouth, and distrust beset her mind. In short, the whole conduct of the mysterious being she studied was of a character to distract the opinions of one who took a more enlarged view of men and life than came within the competency of his housekeeper.

The battle of the Plains had taught the cautious Washington the advantages his enemy possessed in organization, arms, and discipline. There were difficulties to be mastered by his own vigilance and care. Drawing off his troops to the heights, in the northern part of the county, he had bidden defiance to the attacks of the royal army, and Sir William Howe fell back to the enjoyment of his barren conquest—a deserted city. Never afterwards did the opposing armies make the trial of strength within the limits of Westchester; yet hardly a day passed, that the partisans did not make their inroads; or a sun rise, that the inhabitants were spared the relation of excesses which the preceding darkness had served to conceal. Most of the movements of the pedler were made at the hours which others allotted to repose. The evening sun would frequently leave him at one extremity of the county, and the morning find him at the other. His pack was his

never-failing companion; and there were those who closely studied him, in his moments of traffic, and thought his only purpose was the accumulation of gold. He would be often seen near the Highlands, with a body bending under its load; and again near the Harlaem River, travelling with lighter steps, with his face towards the setting sun. But these glances at him were uncertain and fleeting. The intermediate time no eye could penetrate. For months he disappeared, and no traces of his course were ever known.

Strong parties held the heights of Harlaem, and the northern end of Manhattan Island was bristling with the bayonets of the English sentinels, yet the pedler glided among them unnoticed and uninjured. His approaches to the American lines were also frequent; but generally so conducted as to baffle pursuit. Many a sentinel, placed in the gorges of the mountains, spoke of a strange figure that had been seen

gliding by them in the mists of the evening. These stories reached the ears of the officers, and, as we have related, in two instances the trader had fallen into the hands of the Americans. The first time he had escaped from Lawton, shortly after his arrest; but the second he was condemned to die. On the morning of his intended execution, the cage was opened, but the bird had flown. This extraordinary escape had been made from the custody of a favorite officer of Washington, and sentinels who had been thought worthy to guard the person of the commander-in-chief. Bribery and treason could not be imputed to men so well esteemed, and the opinion gained ground among the common soldiery, that the pedler had dealings with the dark one. Katy, however, always repelled this opinion with indignation; for within the recesses of her own bosom, the housekeeper, in ruminating on the events, concluded that the evil spirit did not pay

in gold. Nor, continued the wary spinster in her cogitations, does Washington; paper and promises were all that the leader of the American troops could dispense to his servants. After the alliance with France, when silver became more abundant in the country, although the scrutinizing eyes of Katy never let any opportunity of examining into the deer-skin purse pass unimproved, she was never able to detect the image of Louis intruding into the presence of the well-known countenance of George III. In short, the secret hoard of Harvey sufficiently showed in its contents that all its contributions had been received from the British.

The house of Birch had been watched at different times by the Americans, with a view to his arrest, but never with success; the reputed spy possessing a secret means of intelligence, that invariably defeated their schemes. Once, when a strong body of the continental army held the

Four Corners for a whole summer, orders had been received from Washington himself, never to leave the door of Harvey Birch unwatched. The command was rigidly obeyed, and during this long period the pedler was unseen; the detachment was withdrawn, and the following night Birch re-entered his dwelling. The father of Harvey had been greatly molested, in consequence of the suspicious character of the son. But, notwithstanding the most minute scrutiny into the conduct of the old man, no fact could be substantiated against him to his injury, and his property was too small to keep alive the zeal of patriots by profession. Its confiscation and purchase would not have rewarded their trouble. Age and sorrow were now about to spare him further molestation, for the lamp of life had been drained of its oil. The recent separation of the father and son had been painful, but they had submitted in obedience to what both thought a

duty. The old man had kept his dying situation a secret from the neighborhood, in the hope that he might still have the company of his child in his last moments. The confusion of the day, and his increasing dread that Harvey might be too late, helped to hasten the event he would fain arrest for a little while. As night set in, his illness increased to such a degree, that the dismayed housekeeper sent a truant boy, who had shut himself up with them during the combat, to the Locusts, in quest of a companion to cheer her solitude. Cæsar, alone, could be spared, and, loaded with eatables and cordials by the kind-hearted Miss Peyton, the black had been despatched on his duty. The dying man was past the use of medicines, and his chief anxiety seemed to centre in a meeting with his child.

The noise of the chase had been heard by the group in the house, but its cause was not understood; and as both the black and Katy were ap-

prised of the detachment of American horse being below them, they supposed it to proceed from the return of that party. They heard the dragoons, as they moved slowly by the building; but in compliance with the prudent injunction of the black, the housekeeper forebore to indulge her curiosity. The old man had closed his eyes, and his attendants believed him to be asleep. The house contained two large rooms, and as many small ones. One of the former served for kitchen and sitting-room; in the other lay the father of Birch; of the latter, one was the sanctuary of the vestal, and the other contained the stock of provisions. A huge chimney of stone rose in the centre, serving, of itself, for a partition between the larger rooms; and fire-places of corresponding dimensions were in each apartment. A bright flame was burning in that of the common room, and within the very jambs of its monstrous jaws sat Cæsar and Katy, at the time

of which we write. The African was impressing his caution on the housekeeper, and commenting on the general danger of indulging an idle curiosity.

"Best nebber tempt a Satan," said Cæsar, rolling up his eyes till the whites glistened by the glare of the fire; "I berry like heself to lose an ear for carrying a little bit of a letter; dere much mischief come of curiosity. If dere had nebber been a man curious to see Africa, dere would be no color people out of deir own country; but I wish Harvey get back."

"It is very disregardful in him to be away at such a time," said Katy, imposingly. "Suppose now his father wanted to make his last will in the testament, who is there to do so solemn and awful an act for him? Harvey is a very wasteful and a very disregardful man!"

"Perhaps he make him afore?"

"It would not be a wonderment if he had,"

returned the housekeeper; "he is whole days looking into the Bible."

"Then he read a berry good book," said the black, solemnly, "Miss Fanny read in him to Dinah now and den."

"You are right, Cæsar. The Bible is the best of books, and one that reads it as often as Harvey's father should have the best of reasons for so doing. This is no more than common-sense."

She rose from her seat, and stealing softly to a chest of drawers in the room of the sick man, she took from it a large Bible, heavily bound, and secured with strong clasps of brass, with which she returned to the negro. The volume was eagerly opened, and they proceeded instantly to examine its pages. Katy was far from an expert scholar, and to Cæsar the characters were absolutely strangers. For some time the housekeeper was occupied in finding out the word Matthew, in which she had no sooner succeeded than she

pointed out the word, with great complacency, to the attentive Cæsar.

"Berry well, now look him t'rough," said the black, peeping over the housekeeper's shoulder, as he held a long, lank candle of yellow tallow, in such a manner as to throw its feeble light on the volume.

"Yes, but I must begin with the very beginning of the book," replied the other, turning the leaves carefully back, until, moving two at once, she lighted upon a page covered with writing. "Here," said the housekeeper, shaking with the eagerness of expectation, "here are the very words themselves; now I would give the world itself to know whom he has left the big silver shoe-buckles to."

"Read 'em," said Cæsar, laconically.

"And the black walnut drawers; for Harvey could never want furniture of that quality, as long as he is a bachelor!"

"Why he no want 'em as well as he fader?"

"And the six silver table-spoons; Harvey always uses the iron!"

"P'r'ap he say, widout so much talk," returned the sententious black, pointing one of his crooked and dingy fingers at the open volume.

Thus repeatedly advised, and impelled by her own curiosity, Katy began to read. Anxious to come to the part which most interested herself she dipped at once into the centre of the subject.

"Chester Birch, born September 1st, 1755,"—read the spinster, with a deliberation that did no great honor to her scholarship.

"Well, what he gib him?"

"Abigail Birch, born July 12th, 1757,"—continued the housekeeper, in the same tone.

"I t'ink he ought to gib her 'e spoon."

"June 1st, 1760. On this awful day, the judgement of an offended God lighted on my house": a heavy groan from the adjoining room made

the spinster instinctively close the volume, and Cæsar, for a moment, shook with fear. Neither possessed sufficient resolution to go and examine the condition of the sufferer, but his heavy breathing continued as usual. Katy dared not, however, reopen the Bible, and carefully securing its clasps, it was laid on the table in silence. Cæsar took his chair again, and after looking timidly round the room, remarked,—

“I t’ought he time war’ come!”

“No,” said Katy, solemnly, “he will live till the tide is out, or the first cock crows in the morning.”

“Poor man!” continued the black, nestling still farther into the chimney-corner, “I hope he lay quiet after he die.”

“’Twould be no astonishment to me if he didn’t; for they say an unquiet life makes an uneasy grave.”

“Johnny Birch a berry good man in he way.

All mankind can't be a minister; for if he do, who would be a congregation?"

"Ah! Cæsar, he is good only who does good—can you tell me why honestly gotten gold should be hidden in the bowels of the earth!"

"Grach!—I t'ink it must be to keep t'e Skinner from findin' him; if he know where he be, why don't he dig him up?"

"There may be reasons not comprehensible to you," said Katy, moving her chair so that her clothes covered the charmed stone, underneath which lay the secret treasures of the pedler, unable to refrain speaking of that which she would have been very unwilling to reveal; "but a rough outside often holds a smooth inside." Cæsar stared around the building, unable to fathom the hidden meaning of his companion, when his roving eyes suddenly became fixed, and his teeth chattered with affright. The change in the countenance of the black was instantly perceived by

Katy, and turning her face, she saw the pedler himself, standing within the door of the room.

"Is he alive?" asked Birch, tremulously, and seemingly afraid to receive the answer.

"Surely," said Katy, rising hastily, and officiously offering her chair; "he must live till day, or till the tide is down."

Disregarding all but the fact that his father still lived, the pedler stole gently into the room of his dying parent. The tie which bound the father and son was of no ordinary kind. In the wide world they were all to each other. Had Katy but read a few lines further in the record, she would have seen the sad tale of their misfortunes. At one blow competence and kindred had been swept from them, and from that day to the present hour, persecution and distress had followed their wandering steps. Approaching the bedside, Harvey leaned his body forward, and,

in a voice nearly choked by his feelings, he whispered near the ear of the sick,—

“Father, do you know me?”

The parent slowly opened his eyes, and a smile of satisfaction passed over his pallid features, leaving behind it the impression of death, more awful by the contrast. The pedler gave a restorative he had brought with him to the parched lips of the sick man, and for a few minutes new vigor seemed imparted to his frame. He spoke, but slowly, and with difficulty. Curiosity kept Katy silent; awe had the same effect on Cæsar; and Harvey seemed hardly to breathe, as he listened to the language of the departing spirit.

“My son,” said the father in a hollow voice, “God is as merciful as He is just; if I threw the cup of salvation from my lips when a youth, He graciously offers it to me in mine age. He has chastised to purify, and I go to join the spirits of

our lost family. In a little while, my child, you will be alone. I know you too well not to foresee you will be a pilgrim through life. The bruised reed may endure, but it will never rise. You have that within you, Harvey, that will guide you aright; persevere, as you have begun, for the duties of life are never to be neglected—and” —a noise in the adjoining room interrupted the dying man, and the impatient pedler hastened to learn the cause, followed by Katy and the black. The first glance of his eye on the figure in the doorway told the trader but too well his errand, and the fate that probably awaited himself. The intruder was a man still young in years, but his lineaments bespoke a mind long agitated by evil passions. His dress was of the meanest materials, and so ragged and unseemly, as to give him the appearance of studied poverty. His hair was prematurely whitened, and his sunken, lowering eye avoided the bold, for-

ward look of innocence. There was a restlessness in his movements, and an agitation in his manner, that proceeded from the workings of the foul spirit within him, and which was not less offensive to others than distressing to himself. This man was a well-known leader of one of those gangs of marauders who infested the county with a semblance of patriotism, and who were guilty of every grade of offence, from simple theft up to murder. Behind him stood several other figures clad in a similar manner, but whose countenances expressed nothing more than the indifference of brutal insensibility. They were all well armed with muskets and bayonets, and provided with the usual implements of foot-soldiers. Harvey knew resistance to be vain, and quietly submitted to their directions. In the twinkling of an eye both he and Cæsar were stripped of their decent garments, and made to exchange clothes with two of the

filthiest of the band. They were then placed in separate corners of the room, and under the muzzles of the muskets, required faithfully to answer such interrogatories as were put to them.

“Where is your pack?” was the first question to the pedler.

“Hear me,” said Birch, trembling with agitation; “in the next room is my father, now in the agonies of death; let me go to him, receive his blessing, and close his eyes, and you shall have all—ay, all.”

“Answer me as I put the questions, or this musket shall send you to keep the old driveller company: where is your pack?”

“I will tell you nothing, unless you let me go to my father,” said the pedler, resolutely.

His persecutor raised his arm with a malicious sneer, and was about to execute his threat, when one of his companions checked him.

“What would you do?” he said, “you surely



forget the reward. Tell us where are your goods, and you shall go to your father."

Birch complied instantly, and a man was despatched in quest of the booty; he soon returned, throwing the bundle on the floor, swearing it was as light as feathers.

"Ay," cried the leader, "there must be gold somewhere for what it did contain. Give us your gold, Mr. Birch; we know you have it; you will not take continental, not you."

"You break your faith," said Harvey.

"Give us your gold," exclaimed the other, furiously, pricking the pedler with his bayonet until the blood followed his pushes in streams. At this instant a slight movement was heard in the adjoining room, and Harvey cried imploringly,—

"Let me—let me go to my father, and you shall have all."

"I swear you shall go then," said the Skinner.

"Here, take the trash," cried Birch, as he threw aside the purse, which he had contrived to conceal, notwithstanding the change in his garments.

The robber raised it from the floor with a hellish laugh.

"Ay, but it shall be to your father in heaven."

"Monster! have you no feeling, no faith, no honesty?"

"To hear him, one would think there was not a rope around his neck already," said the other, laughing. "There is no necessity for your being uneasy, Mr. Birch; if the old man gets a few hours the start of you in the journey, you will be sure to follow him before noon tomorrow."

This unfeeling communication had no effect on the pedler who listened with gasping breath to every sound from the room of his parent, until he heard his own name spoken in the hollow,

sepulchral tones of death. Birch could endure no more, but shrieking out,—

“Father! hush—father! I come—I come!” he darted by his keeper, and was the next moment pinned to the wall by the bayonet of another of the band. Fortunately, his quick motion had caused him to escape a thrust aimed at his life, and it was by his clothes only that he was confined.

“No, Mr. Birch,” said the Skinner, “we know you too well for a slippery rascal, to trust you out of sight—your gold, your gold!”

“You have it,” said the pedler, writhing with agony.

“Ay, we have the purse, but you have more purses. King George is a prompt paymaster, and you have done him many a piece of good service. Where is your hoard? without it you will never see your father.”

“Remove the stone underneath the woman,”

cried the pedler, eagerly—"remove the stone."

"He raves! he raves!" said Katy, instinctively moving her position to a different stone from the one on which she had been standing. In a moment it was torn from its bed, and nothing but earth was seen beneath.

"He raves! you have driven him from his right mind," continued the trembling spinster: "would any man in his senses keep gold under a hearth?"

"Peace, babbling fool!" cried Harvey. "Lift the corner stone, and you will find that which will make you rich, and me a beggar."

"And then you will be despicable," said the housekeeper, bitterly. "A pedler without goods and without money is sure to be despicable."

"There will be enough left to pay for his halter," cried the Skinner, who was not slow to follow the instructions of Harvey, soon lighting upon a store of English guineas. The money was

quickly transferred to a bag, notwithstanding the declarations of the spinster, that her dues were unsatisfied, and that, of right, ten of the guineas were her property.

Delighted with a prize that greatly exceeded their expectations, the band prepared to depart, intending to take the pedler with them, in order to give him up to the American troops above, and to claim the reward offered for his apprehension. Everything was ready, and they were about to lift Birch in their arms, for he resolutely refused to move an inch, when a form appeared in their midst, which appalled the stoutest heart among them. The father had arisen from his bed, and he tottered forth at the cries of his son. Around his body was thrown the sheet of the bed, and his fixed eye and haggard face gave him the appearance of a being from another world. Even Katy and Cæsar thought it was the spirit of the elder Birch, and they fled the house,

followed by the alarmed Skinners in a body.

The excitement, which had given the sick man strength, soon vanished, and the pedler, lifting him in his arms, reconveyed him to his bed. The reaction of the system which followed hastened to close the scene.

The glazed eye of the father was fixed upon the son; his lips moved, but his voice was unheard. Harvey bent down, and, with the parting breath of his parent received his dying benediction. A life of privation, and of wrongs, embittered most of the future hours of the pedler. But under no sufferings, in no misfortunes, the subject of poverty and obloquy, the remembrance of that blessing never left him; it constantly gleamed over the images of the past, shedding a holy radiance around his saddest hours of despondency; it cheered the prospect of the future with the prayers of a pious spirit; and it brought the sweet assurance of having faithfully and

truly discharged the sacred offices of filial love.

The retreat of Cæsar and the spinster had been too precipitate to admit of much calculation; yet they themselves instinctively separated themselves from the Skinners. After fleeing a short distance they paused, and the maiden commenced in a solemn voice,—

“Oh! Cæsar, was it not dreadful to walk before he had been laid in his grave! It must have been the money that disturbed him; they say that Captain Kidd walks near the spot where he buried gold in the old war.”

“I never t’ink Johnny Birch hab such a big eye!” said the African, his teeth chattering with the fright.

“I’m sure ’twould be a botherment to a living soul to lose so much money. Harvey will be nothing but an utterly despicable, poverty-stricken wretch. I wonder who he thinks would even be his housekeeper!”

“Maybe a spooke take away Harvey, too,” observed Cæsar, moving still nearer to the side of the maiden. But a new idea had seized the imagination of the spinster. She thought it not improbable that the prize had been forsaken in the confusion of the retreat; and after deliberating and reasoning for some time with Cæsar, they determined to venture back, and ascertain this important fact, and, if possible, learn what had been the fate of the pedler. Much time was spent in cautiously approaching the dreaded spot; and as the spinster had sagaciously placed herself in the line of the Skinners, every stone was examined in the progress in search of the abandoned gold. But although the suddenness of the alarm and the cry of Cæsar had impelled the freebooters to so hasty a retreat, they grasped the hoard with a hold that death itself would not have loosened. Perceiving everything to be quiet within, Katy at length mustered resolution to

enter the dwelling, where she found the pedler, with a heavy heart, performing the last sad offices for the dead. A few words sufficed to explain to Katy the nature of her mistake; but Cæsar continued to his dying day to astonish the sable inmates of the kitchen with learned dissertations on spooks, and to relate how direful was the appearance of that of Johnny Birch.

The danger compelled the pedler to abridge even the short period that American custom leaves the deceased with us; and aided by the black and Katy, his painful task was soon ended. Cæsar volunteered to walk a couple of miles with orders to a carpenter; and, the body being habited in its ordinary attire, was left, with a sheet thrown decently over it, to await the return of the messenger.

The Skinners had fled precipitately to the wood, which was but a short distance from the house of Birch, and once safely sheltered within

its shades, they halted, and mustered their panic-stricken forces.

"What in the name of fury seized your coward hearts?" cried their dissatisfied leader, drawing his breath heavily.

"The same question might be asked yourself," returned one of the band, sullenly.

"From your fright, I thought a party of De Lancey's men were upon us. Oh! you are brave gentlemen at a race!"

"We follow our captain."

"Then follow me back, and let us secure the scoundrel, and receive the reward."

"Yes; and by the time we reach the house, that black rascal will have the mad Virginian upon us; by my soul, I would rather meet fifty Cow-Boys than that single man."

"Fool!" cried the enraged leader, "don't you know Dunwoodie's horse are at the Corners, full two miles from here?"

"I care not where the dragoons are but I will swear that I saw Captain Lawton enter the house of old Wharton, while I lay watching an opportunity of getting the British colonel's horse from the stable."

"And if he should come, won't a bullet silence a dragoon from the South as well as from old England?"

"Ay, but I don't choose a hornet's nest about my ears; rase the skin of one of that corps, and you will never see another peaceable night's foraging again."

"Well," muttered the leader, as they retired deeper into the wood, "this sottish pedler will stay to see the old devil buried; and though we cannot touch him at the funeral (for that would raise every old woman and priest in America against us), he'll wait to look after the movables, and tomorrow night shall wind up his concerns."

With this threat they withdrew to one of their usual places of resort, until darkness should again give them an opportunity of marauding on the community without danger of detection.



